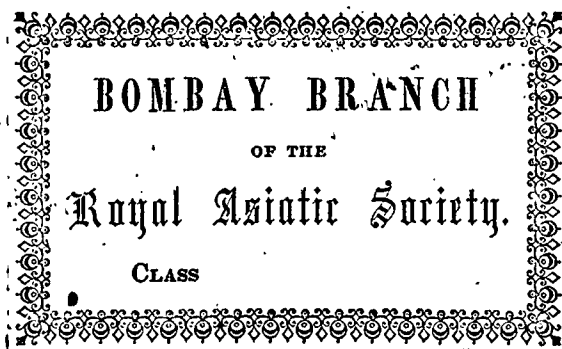


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THE
FOREIGN POLICY OF ENGLAND,

1570 : 1870.

AN HISTORICAL ESSAY.

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BY

EARL RUSSELL.

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THE
FOREIGN POLICY OF ENGLAND.

I.

THERE are two prevalent notions respecting the foreign policy of England. The one is widely diffused in England, the other is generally believed in upon the continent of Europe. The one supposes that England has been forward to interfere in all foreign quarrels, and has spent much blood and treasure in order to maintain or restore an imaginary balance of power. The other is, that, so far from being chivalrous in support of afflicted neighbours, she is entirely selfish in her policy; very unwilling to risk her mercantile interests; unwarlike in her general character, and—in spite of Cressy, Poitiers, Agincourt, Blenheim, Malplaquet, Oudenarde, Vimiera, Salamanca, Vittoria, Waterloo—very unequal to the great continental Powers in the fighting capacity of her soldiers, and in efficiency of military organisation.

Neither of these notions is accurate, although each may have some foundation in parts of our history;

and each has been supported by some misquoted facts, and some malignant assertions.

The general course of our policy has varied both according to the changing aspect of the world with which we have had to deal, and the high or low capacity of the statesmen to whom the rudder of the State has been confided. Indeed, not only has our direction been often altered, according to the complexion of affairs, but the very name of a policy pursued or proposed has varied with the views of the parties who put it forth as the certain guide of our conduct towards foreign nations. Thus the maxim of Vattel, that every State ought to be at liberty to govern its own internal affairs according to its own principles and its own will, has been wholly perverted from its original meaning by the application of the term intervention, not merely to interference in the domestic disorders and disputes of a foreign State, but to interference to prevent one foreign State from crushing by arms any other State. Prince Talleyrand, seeing the wide extent of these exceptions, when he was asked what was the meaning of the term non-intervention, replied with truth as well as wit, 'Non-intervention is a philosophical, metaphysical, political term, which signifies pretty much the same thing as intervention.'

To return to our definition of English policy. England, while not pretending to any territorial possessions on the continent of Europe, has been exceedingly jealous of her right to frame her own laws and

maintain her own liberties. She has repelled the attempts of Philip of Spain to invade her soil ; the presumption of Lewis XIV. in assuming a right to dictate who shall be her sovereign ; and the arrogant attempts of Napoleon Bonaparte to fetter her press, and to exclude her from continental alliances and continental commerce. In order to vindicate her own independent position she has found it expedient to connect herself by treaty with other Powers, and to exert her force to resist the preponderating power of Spain at one time and of France at another. Thus, although her kings may at one period have been base and treacherous, and her statesmen at other periods singularly wanting in foresight and in firmness, the general course of the British Parliament and people has been prompted by a strong and patriotic desire to maintain the honour^t and the freedom of our country. Engaged in wars carried on for these objects, we have often been allied with weaker Powers, and by our aid, neither wholly interested nor wholly generous, we have enabled Holland, Portugal, Prussia, and Spain to vindicate¹ their independent position among the nations of the world.

The reign of Queen Elizabeth has been lately so well illustrated by an author of historical genius that it is unnecessary for me to dwell upon it. The character of that extraordinary princess, with all its weaknesses, all its irresolution, all its bias in favour of regal and priestly authority, was on the whole favourable to the Protestant religion, to native inde-

pendence, and to the supremacy of the Crown against all pretenders, foreign and domestic, spiritual and lay. The picture of England in 1570 is thus drawn by Mr. Froude:—

The social convulsions which accompanied the earlier stages of the Reformation had settled down. The state papers are no longer crowded with complaints of the oppression of the poor. The people could again be trusted with arms without fear that they would use them against the landowners. . . . The Flemings, who had crowded across the channel in tens of thousands, brought with them their arts and industries . . . but the English merchants and sailors were tempted from legitimate trade by the more profitable occupation of privateering, and in the 14th year of Elizabeth, the burden of all the vessels of the kingdom engaged in ordinary commerce scarcely exceeded 50,000 tons.*

The reign of James I. and that of Charles I. require little notice on the subject of foreign policy. Those two sovereigns were far too much enamoured of the theory of the divine right of kings to see with any satisfaction the growth of the Dutch Republic at the expense of the absolute power of the Spanish monarchs. But the irrepressible vigour of the Dutch patriots, and the military talents of the princes of the House of Orange, established firmly the political independence of Holland.†

* *Froude*, Vol. X., p. 107.

† Some events of this time resemble what has occurred in our own day. When Henry the Third beheld Paris from the heights of St. Cloud, he is said to have addressed his capital in these terms:—
‘Paris, chef du royaume, mais chef trop gros et trop capricieux, tu as besoin d’une saignée pour te guérir, ainsi que toute la France, de la frénésie que tu lui communique! Encore quelques jours, et on ne

After the execution of Charles I., France and Spain contended eagerly for the favour of Cromwell.* Far from showing any abhorrence to a regicide peace the French and Spanish Ministers perceived very clearly the advantage their sovereigns might gain by having England on their side. Cromwell, who entertained a large and even excessive ambition to extend English influence on the Continent, and to form alliances for the purpose of promoting the Protestant interest, obtained from the French Court the cession of Dunkirk, and added to the territories of the Commonwealth the rich island of Jamaica. Nor did he neglect the persecuted Protestants of the Vaudois. Seeing that his ships could not reach Savoy, and that he had no army to send there, he directed John Milton, his Foreign Secretary, to request, in a Latin letter addressed to Cardinal Mazarin, the exercise of French influence in favour of the ill-used Protestants of the Vaud Mountains. He did not fail in obtaining this intervention, and, however some purists of the peace party may be shocked at the notion of secret diplomacy and private letters, it is pleasant to reflect that down to the latest times British Ministers were authorised to succour by moderate supplies, and to countenance, by their presence, the worship of these simple mountaineers. Down to the time when the

verra ni tes maisons, ni tes murailles, mais seulement le lieu où tu auras été.' How different were the spirit of the Ligue and the spirit of the Commune, but how much alike in their effects!

* See Whitelocke's *Embassy to Sweden*.

government of Piedmont became the government of Italy, and the religious freedom of the Waldenses was extended to all Italians, British protection of the Waldenses was maintained.

When Cromwell, courted on both sides, decided in favour of France, the Spanish Government were obliged to content themselves with buying the pictures, and giving refuge to the family, of Charles I.

With Charles II. we enter upon the field of modern politics.

Charles II. was lax in his morals, easy in his temper, and devoid of all principle, religious or moral. Yet he had some fits of patriotism, and some throbs of activity. When told that Gourville, a Frenchman, had said that a king of England who should be the man of his people would be extremely powerful, he laid his hand upon his heart, and said, 'And I will be the man of my people.' It was in a transient warmth of this kind that, neglecting for a while to feed the ducks in Rosamond's pond, he permitted Sir William Temple, the first man who gave fame to the name of Temple, to frame the Triple League, of England, Holland, and Sweden, as a barrier against France. The account given by David Hume of this transaction is so interesting, that I make no apology for copying it:—

Charles resolved with great prudence to take the first step towards a confederacy. Sir William Temple, his resident at Brussels, received orders to go secretly to the Hague, and to concert with the States the means of saving the

Netherlands. This man, whom philosophy had taught to despise the world without rendering him unfit for it, was frank, open, sincere, superior to the little tricks of vulgar politicians; and meeting in De Witt with a man of the same generous and enlarged sentiments, he immediately opened his master's intentions, and pressed a speedy conclusion. A treaty was from the first negotiated between these two statesmen with the same cordiality as if it were a private transaction between intimate companions. Deeming the interests of their country the same, they gave full scope to that sympathy of character which disposed them to an entire reliance on each other's professions and engagements. And though jealousy against the House of Orange might inspire De Witt with an aversion to a strict union with England, he generously resolved to sacrifice all private considerations to the public service.

Temple insisted on an offensive league between England and Holland, in order to oblige France to relinquish all her conquests; but De Witt told him that this measure was too bold and precipitate to be agreed to by the States. He said that the French were the old and constant allies of the Republic; and till matters came to extremities, she never would deem it prudent to abandon a friendship so well established, and rely entirely on a treaty with England, which had lately waged so cruel a war against her; that ever since the reign of Elizabeth there had been such a fluctuation in the English councils, that it was not possible for two years together to take any sure and certain measures with that kingdom; that though the present ministry, having entered into views so conformable to national interests, promised greater firmness and constancy, it might still be unsafe, in a business of such consequence, to put entire confidence in them; that the French monarch was young, haughty and powerful; and if treated in so imperious a manner, would expose himself to the greatest extremities rather than submit; that it was sufficient if he could be constrained to adhere to the offers which he himself had already made;

and if the remaining provinces of the Low Countries could be thereby saved from the danger with which they were at present threatened ; and that the other Powers, in Germany and the north, whose assistance they might expect, would be satisfied with putting a stop to the French conquests, without pretending to recover the places already lost.

The English minister was content to accept of the terms proposed by the pensionary. Lewis had offered to relinquish all the Queen's* rights, on condition either of keeping the conquests which he had made last campaign, or of receiving in lieu of them Franche-comte, together with Cambray Aire and St. Omers. De Witt and Temple founded their treaty upon this proposal. They agreed to offer their mediation to the contending powers, and oblige France to adhere to this alternative and Spain to accept of it. If Spain refused, they agreed that France should not prosecute her claim by arms, but leave it entirely to England and Holland to employ force for making the terms effectual. And the remainder of the Low Countries they thenceforth guaranteed to Spain. A defensive alliance was likewise concluded between Holland and England.

The articles of this confederacy were soon adjusted by such candid and able negotiators. But the greatest difficulty still remained. By the constitution of the Republic, all the towns in all the provinces must give their consent to every alliance ; and besides that this formality could not be despatched in less than two months, it was justly to be dreaded that the influence of France would obstruct the passing of the treaty in some of the smaller cities. D'Estrades, the French ambassador, a man of abilities, hearing of the league which was on the carpet, treated it lightly ; 'Six weeks hence,' said he, 'we shall speak to it.' To obviate this difficulty, De Witt had the courage, for the public good, to break through the laws in so fundamental an article ; and by his authority he prevailed with the States General at

* The Queen of Lewis XIV.

once to sign and ratify the league; though they acknowledged that if that measure should displease their constituents, they risked their heads by this irregularity. After sealing, all parties embraced with great cordiality. Temple cried out, '*At Breda as friends; here, as brothers!*' And De Witt added, that now the matter was finished it looked like a miracle.

The fit of virtue did not last. Hume goes on to say:—

But Lewis well knew Charles's character, and the usual fluctuation of his councils. In order to fix him in the French interests, he resolved to bind him by the ties of pleasure, the only ones which with him were irresistible; and he made him a present of a French mistress, by whose means he hoped for the future to govern him. The Duchess of Orleans brought with her a young lady of the name of Queroüaille, whom the king carried to London, and soon after created Duchess of Portsmouth. He was extremely attached to her during the whole course of his life; and she proved a great means of supporting his connections with her native country. *

Charles II.'s notion of religion seems to have been that it was a means by which he might acquire power and money.

Jefferson, the American President, says of some town he arrives at in his travels, 'Fifteen religions here, all very good.' Charles would have given similar praise to fifty different religions provided they contributed to his security and his profit. Hume has truly said that, in compensation for a large

* Hume's *Hist. of England*, Vol. VII., p. 433.

yearly bribe from the French king, he was ready to change the pure religion, and undermine the free constitution of England. But he was habitually indolent, and provided he was not called upon to profess openly the Roman Catholic faith, and make any violent alteration in the established laws, or to abandon the Duchess of Portsmouth, he was content to leave to a portion of his subjects the enjoyment of their own worship, and even some remnant of liberty. His brother, the Duke of York, was of a different temper. He could not bear to see the 'pestilent northern heresy,' as his secretary Coleman called it, flourishing in these kingdoms. Some satisfaction was given him in this respect. In Scotland, the zealots who would not renounce their belief in the Westminster Confession of Faith, were shot on the moors, or exposed to the fury of the sea till they were overwhelmed by the waves, or tortured by bootikins, or hung in the Grass-market, exulting in the sacrifice of their lives in what they believed to be the cause of truth. But although the cruel and implacable character of James had free range in Scotland, his power in England was much circumscribed. It is true that Richard Baxter, a virtuous and pious teacher of Christianity, was imprisoned by the Government, and insulted from the Bench of Justice under cover of the Five Mile Act and other persecuting laws; it is true that John Bunyan, a man of real genius, who exerted with powerful effect the influence of pious eloquence, was hunted from prison to prison by the

servile judges of the court ; but these enjoyments of intolerance gave but a scanty satisfaction to the sanguinary spirit of James. There were two men ardent in their love of liberty—one of them firmly attached to constitutional monarchy; the other full of zeal for that ‘good old cause’ for which John Hampden had bled in the field.

These two men were William Russell and Algernon Sidney. It seemed to the Duke of York that the cause of despotism could not be firmly established, unless the lives of those two men were taken. William Russell was the beloved leader of the country party, as it was called, in the House of Commons. He had there moved and carried the Exclusion Bill. He afterwards took it up, amidst great cheering, to the bar of the House of Lords. Had the Bill been carried in that House, the danger to be feared from a successor to the crown devoted to the Church of Rome, and a slave of the Monarch of France, would have been avoided ; the painful and uncertain struggle which ended in the expulsion of James II. would have been unnecessary. The foresight of the Exclusionists was fully justified; their efforts were unfortunately defeated by the wit and ingenuity of Halifax, the disgust created by the monstrous inventions of the Popish plot, and the popular attachment to the principle of hereditary succession.

After this event, it was agreed by the leaders of the popular party that they should meet from time to time to concert measures, but that in no case would they recur to force with a view to alter the Govern-

ment.* But with a man of the simple mind of William Russell, no precaution was sufficient. The Earl of Shaftesbury, who

For a calm unfit,
Would steer too nigh the sands to show his wit,

collected partisans for a revolt, while the Southampton House party sought to avoid the danger. It so happened, however, that Lord Russell was invited to meet some friends and acquaintance to taste wine at a wine merchant's of the name of Shepherd. Some of his friends begged him not to go, and warned him of the danger he might incur from the malignity of his enemies. But, he thinking there was no danger, and being determined not to engage in any plot, as 'a change of Government could not be made now, as

* This view of the projects of the leaders of the popular party is confirmed by the despatches of Barillon. Writing from London on the 21st of April, 1681, he says:—'*L'attention de tous les partis est grande pour ne rien faire qui soit directement contre les lois.*' On the 29th of June, 1682, he says:—'*Ce que je puis dire dans des affaires si brouillées et si difficiles à démêler, c'est qu'il ne me paroît point de disposition présente à l'accomodement entre la cour et les mécontents. Les mêmes obstacles qui l'ont empêchée subsistent toujours. La tentative qui a été faite pour l'accomodement particulier de M. le duc de Monmouth a fait que les chefs des cabales entre lesquels il estoit, et M. de Montaignu aussi, se sont trouvés à un disné chez M. le comte de Bedford, et se sont donnés des assurances réciproques de ne se point accomoder séparément.*' On the 13th of July, 1682, speaking of the attempts to have a sheriff of London named by the Lord Mayor, he says:—'*Tout cela forme de l'agitation et de la chaleur dans les esprits, mais de chaque costé on sait éviter les voyes de fait. Il semble pourtant que le party de la cour ne les craigne pas tant que celui des mécontents, lesquels s'imaginent pouvoir avec le temps réduire la cour à se soumettre.*'—MS. copied from the Archives of Paris.

formerly, by a few great men,' did not take care to avoid the meeting. Lady Russell testified afterwards to his innocence, but she admitted that he may have heard treasonable talk. This was sufficient for Charles and James. Lord Russell, at the same time, expected that legally or illegally his life would be taken.

Algernon Sidney had fallen into the Court trap in another manner. He had written a 'Discourse on Government,' full of sentiments and arguments in favour of liberty. Although the book was kept in his study and was not published, materials were found in it for finding him guilty of treason, and his fearless behaviour at the trial availed him as little as the law of treason to prove his innocence.

These judicial murders were completed, and it was not till after the Revolution that the sentence of Russell was reversed, as procured 'by undue and illegal return of jurors,' and that he was declared to have been 'by partial and unjust constructions of law, wrongfully convicted, attainted and executed for high treason.'* It was therefore enacted 'that the said conviction, judgment and attainder be and are hereby reversed, made and declared null and void to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatever.'

The fairest account we have of the trials of Russell and Sidney is to be found in Hallam's 'History of England;' if somewhat marked by the precision of a lawyer, it is deeply imbued with the spirit of a

* *State Trials.*

lover of liberty. I therefore transcribe his account of the plot and its failure:—

The people of this country are, by our laws and constitution, bound only to obey a Parliament duly chosen, and this violation of charters, in the reigns of Charles and James, appears to be the great and leading justification of that event which drove the latter from the throne. It can, therefore, be no matter of censure, in a moral sense, that some men of pure and patriotic virtue, mingled, it must be owned, with others of a far inferior temper to hold consultations as to the best means of resisting a Government which, whether, to judge from these proceedings, or from the language of its partisans, was aiming without disguise at arbitrary power. But as resistance to established authority can never be warrantable until it is expedient, we could by no means approve any schemes of insurrection that might be projected in 1682 unless we could perceive that there was a fair chance of their success. And this we are not led by what we read of the spirit of those times to believe. The tide ran violently in another direction; the courage of the Whigs was broken; their adversaries were strong in numbers and in zeal. But hence it is reasonable to infer that men like Lord Essex and Lord Russell, with so much to lose by failure, with such good sense, and such abhorrence of civil calamity, would not ultimately have resolved on the desperate issue of arms, though they might deem it prudent to form estimates of their strength, and to knit together a confederacy which absolute necessity might call into action. It is beyond doubt that the supposed conspirators had debated among themselves the subject of an insurrection, and poised the chances of civil war. Thus much the most jealous lawyer, I presume, will allow, might be done, without risking the penalties of treason. They had, however, gone farther; and, by concerting measures in different places as well as in Scotland, for a rising, though contingently, and without any fixed determination to carry it into effect, most probably (if the whole business had

been disclosed in testimony) laid themselves open to the law, according to the construction it has frequently received. There is a considerable difficulty after all that has been written, in stating the extent of their designs; but I think we may assume, that a wide-spreading and formidable insurrection was for several months in agitation. But the difficulties and hazards of the enterprise had already caused Lord Russell and Lord Essex to recede from the desperate counsels of Shaftesbury: and but for the unhappy detection of the conspiracy and the perfidy of Lord Howard, these two noble persons, whose lives were untimely lost to their country, might have survived to join the banner and support the throne of William. It is needless to observe that the minor plot, if we may use that epithet in reference to the relative dignity of the conspirators, for assassinating the king and the Duke of York, had no immediate connection with the schemes of Russell, Essex, and Sidney.

But it is by no means a consequence, from the admission we have made, that the evidence adduced on Lord Russell's trial was sufficient to justify his conviction. It appears to me that Lord Howard, and perhaps Rumsey, were unwilling witnesses; and that the former, as is frequently the case with those who betray their friends in order to save their own lives, divulged no more than was extracted by his own danger. The testimony of neither witness, especially Howard, was given with any degree of that precision which is exacted in modern times; and as we now read the trial, it is not probable that a jury in latter ages would have found a verdict of guilty, or would have been advised to it by the Court. But on the other hand, if Lord Howard were really able to prove more than he did, which I much suspect, a better conducted examination would probably have elicited facts unfavourable to the prisoner, which at present do not appear. It may be doubtful whether any overt act of treason is distinctly proved against Lord Russell, except his concurrence in the project of a rising at Taunton, to which Rumsey deposes. But this, depending on the oath

of a single witness, could not be sufficient for a conviction.

Pemberton, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, tried this illustrious prisoner with more humanity than was usually displayed on the Bench; but aware of his precarious tenure in office, he did not venture to check the counsel for the Crown, Sawyer and Jeffreys, permitting them to give a great body of hearsay evidence, with only the feeble and useless remark that it did not affect the prisoner. Yet he checked Lord Anglesea when he offered similar evidence for the defence. In his direction to the jury, it deserves to be remarked, that he by no means advanced the general proposition which better men have held, that a conspiracy to levy war is in itself an overt act of compassing the king's death; limiting it to cases when the king's person might be put in danger; as in the immediate instance, by the alleged scheme of seizing his guards. His language indeed, as recorded in the printed trial, was such as might have produced a verdict of acquittal from a jury tolerably disposed towards the prisoner; but the sheriffs, North and Rich, who had been illegally thrust into office, being men wholly devoted to the prerogative, had taken care to return a panel in whom they could confide.

The trial of Algernon Sidney, at which Jeffreys, now raised to the post of Chief Justice of the King's Bench, presided, is as familiar to all my readers as that of Lord Russell. Their names have been always united in grateful veneration and sympathy. It is notorious that Sidney's conviction was obtained by a most illegal distortion of the evidence. Besides Lord Howard, no living witness could be produced to the conspiracy for an insurrection; and though Jeffreys permitted two others to prepossess the jury by a second-hand story, he was compelled to admit that their testimony could not directly affect the prisoner. The Attorney-General, therefore, had recourse to a paper found in his house, which was given in evidence, either as an overt act of treason by its own nature, or as connected with the

alleged conspiracy; for though it was only in the latter sense that it could be admissible at all, yet Jeffreys took care to insinuate in his charge to the jury, that the doctrines it contained were treasonable in themselves, and without reference to other evidence. In regard to truth, and to that justice which cannot be denied to the worst men in their worst actions, I must observe that the common accusation against the Court in this trial, of having admitted insufficient proof, by the mere comparison of hand-writing, though alleged, not only in most of our historians, but in the Act of Parliament reversing Sidney's attainder, does not appear to be well founded; the testimony to that fact, unless the printed trial is falsified in an extraordinary degree, being such as would be received at present. We may allow also that the passages from this paper, as laid in the indictment, containing very strong assertions of the right of the people to depose an unworthy king, might by possibility, if connected by other evidence with the conspiracy itself, have been admissible as presumptuous for the jury to consider whether they had been written in furtherance of that design. But when they came to be read on the trial with their context, though only with such parts of that as the Attorney-General chose to produce out of a voluminous manuscript, it was clear that they belonged to a theoretical work on government, long since perhaps written, and incapable of any bearing upon the other evidence.'*

" These extracts seem to give a just account of the violent proceedings by which the Court obtained the convictions of Russell and Sidney. It is admitted by Hallam that the evidence produced on Lord Russell's trial was insufficient to justify his conviction. It is admitted that a fair jury might, and probably would, have acquitted him. It is admitted that Sidney's

* Hallam's *Const. Hist. of England*, Vol. II., pp. 452 to 457.

writings did not connect him with the conspiracy. On the whole, then, it may be assumed that with the juries of 1795 Russell and Sidney would have been acquitted, and that with the packed juries of 1683 Hardy and Horne Tooke would have been condemned to death and executed.

Before the end of Charles's reign, the French King being desirous of acquiring Luxemburg gave the King of England a bribe of a million of livres for his consent to the transfer. Charles probably divided the money among his mistresses and 'mimic statesmen.'

I shall not attempt to gild the refined gold of Macaulay's history of James II. Various attempts have been made to depreciate that admirable work, but the blots which have been hit, if not small, are insufficient to condemn the work, while the merits are all-prevailing. Macaulay may have mistaken the Penn of the maids of honour for the Penn of Pennsylvania; he may have coloured some of the circumstances which accompanied the murder of some of the Scotch Presbyterian peasants who appeared in arms for their religion; he may have attributed to the Duke of York greater joy in beholding the tortures of his victims than he actually felt; he may have praised the Prince of Orange over-much; and he certainly has not made sufficient allowance for the vacillations of statesmen who transferred their allegiance from James to William, and from William to James, according to the prevailing passions of the political parties to which they were attached. Marlborough had but

little honesty, and yet his character was hardly so black as it is painted by Macaulay. But we should greatly mistake if we were to conclude that, because the colours of Vandyke are brilliant, his portraits are not, in general, correct likenesses of the statesmen they represent, that Charles was not so winning a cavalier, nor Strafford so stern a statesman, as the great painter represents. Macaulay studies every feature of his historical characters, from the top of the head to the sole of the foot; his narrative brings before us a whole period, with every place marked, and every action described; but the greatest of his merits, the climax of his perfections as an historian, is his general fidelity to truth.

When James was in France he had nothing to do but to follow the rites of his religion. Charles had said that he believed his brother chose his mistresses by the advice of his confessor by way of penance. When his religious observances were transferred from St. James's to St. Germain's they provoked the wit of Fontenelle:—

Quand je veux rimer à Guillaume,
Je trouve aisément un royaume,
Qu'il a su mettre sous ses lois;
Mais quand je veux rimer à Jacques,
J'ai beau rêver, mordre mes doigts,
Je trouve qu'il a fait ses Pâques.

The judicial murders which James had promoted to so great an extent in England and Scotland can have given him but little pleasure on reflection, seeing that liberty flourished in these realms in spite of all his

efforts ; the failure of his plot to assassinate King William on the banks of the Thames must have caused him bitter mortification, and he must have looked back with melancholy regret on his own dastardly behaviour at the battle of the Boyne. •

The success of the Revolution of 1688, and the recognition of William and Mary as King and Queen of England, confirmed the establishment of personal and political liberty. The general operation of the Habeas Corpus Act, which James II. considered subversive of the royal authority ;* in the exercise of the rights of conscience, and the possession of religious freedom the English people obtained their birthright.

It followed that the people of England from this time enjoyed a Government of their own—a Government which, as Talleyrand well remarked in his ‘ Essay on the United States,’ had in it something republican, as the Government of the United States had in it something monarchical. From this time the main object of the foreign policy of England has been to guard and defend the independence and liberty of England.

The great arm by which security has been achieved has been the British navy : the national song proclaims in rhyme, as well as in reason—

Britannia rule the waves,
For Britons never will be slaves.

The charm which has enabled her to ward off

* See *Memoirs of James the Second.*

the dangerous assaults of the greatest Powers—the efforts of Lewis XIV., of the French Republic, and of Napoleon, to subject her to foreign tyranny—has been the alliance of the weaker continental states, who, like ourselves, have sought to maintain their independence against a preponderating military power.

Some extracts from the history of Macaulay will show how this charm worked in the reign of William and Mary, and of William after the death of Mary. I give myself the pleasure of making the following extracts:—

There has scarcely ever been so sad a day in London as that on which the news of the battle of Beachy Head arrived. The shame was insupportable; the peril was imminent. What if the victorious enemy should do what De Ruyter had done? What if the dockyards of Chatham should again be destroyed? What if the Tower itself should be bombarded? What if the vast wood of masts and yard-arms below London Bridge should be in a blaze? Nor was this all. Evil tidings had just arrived from the Low Countries. The allied forces under Waldeck had, in the neighbourhood of Fleurus, encountered the French commanded by the Duke of Luxemburg. The day had been long and fiercely disputed. At length the skill of the French general and the impetuous valour of the French cavalry had prevailed. Thus at the same moment the army of Lewis was victorious in Flanders, and his navy was in undisputed possession of the Channel. Marshal Humieres, with a considerable force, lay not far from the Straits of Dover. It had been given out that he was about to join Luxemburg. But the information which the English Government received from able military men in the Netherlands, and from spies who mixed with the Jacobites, and

which, to so great a master of the art of war as Marlborough, seemed to deserve serious attention, was that the army of Humieres would instantly march to Dunkirk, and would there be taken on board of the fleet of Tourville. Between the coast of Artois and the Nore not a single ship bearing the red cross of St. George would venture to show herself. The embarkation would be the business of a few hours. A few hours might suffice for the voyage: At any moment London might be appalled by the news that thirty thousand French veterans were in Kent, and that the Jacobites of half the counties of the kingdom were in arms. All the regular troops who could be assembled for the defence of the island did not amount to more than ten thousand men. It may be doubted whether our country has ever passed through a more alarming crisis than that of the first week of July, 1690.

But the evil brought with it its own remedy. Those little knew England who imagined that she could be in danger at once of rebellion and invasion; for in truth the danger of invasion was the best security against the danger of rebellion. The cause of James was the cause of France; and though, to superficial observers, the French alliance seemed to be his chief support, it really was the obstacle which made his restoration impossible. In the patriotism, the too often unamiable and unsocial patriotism, of our forefathers, lay the secret at once of William's weakness and of his strength. They were jealous of his love for Holland; but they cordially sympathised with his hatred of Lewis. To their strong sentiment of nationality are to be ascribed almost all those petty annoyances which made the throne of the deliverer, from his accession to his death, so uneasy a seat. But to the same sentiment it is to be ascribed that his throne, constantly menaced and frequently shaken, was never subverted; for much as his people detested his foreign favourites, they detested his foreign adversaries still more. The Dutch were Protestants, the

French were Papists. The Dutch were regarded as self-seeking, grasping, over-reaching allies; the French were mortal enemies. The worst that could be apprehended from the Dutch was, that they might obtain too large a share of the patronage of the Crown, that they might throw on us too large a part of the burdens of the war, that they might obtain commercial advantages at our expense. But the French would conquer us; the French would enslave us; the French would inflict on us calamities such as those which had turned the fair fields and cities of the Palatinate into a desert. The hop-grounds of Kent would be as the vineyards of the Neckar. The High-street of Oxford and the Close of Salisbury would be piled with ruins such as those which covered the spots where the palaces and churches of Heidelberg and Manheim had once stood. The parsonage overshadowed by the old steeple, the farmhouse peeping from among bee-hives and apple blossoms, the manorial hall embosomed in elms, would be given up to a soldiery which knew not what it was to pity old men, or delicate women, or suckling children. The words, 'The French are coming,' like a spell, quelled all murmurs about taxes and abuses, about William's ungracious manners and Portland's lucrative places, and raised a spirit as high and unconquerable as had pervaded, a hundred years before, the ranks which Elizabeth reviewed at Tilbury. Had the army of Humieres landed, it would assuredly have been withstood by almost every male capable of bearing arms. Not only the muskets and pikes, but the scythes and pitchforks would have been too few for the hundreds of thousands who, forgetting all distinction of sect or faction, would have risen up like one man to defend the English soil.

The immediate effect, therefore, of the disasters in the Channel and in Flanders was to unite for a moment the great body of the people. The national antipathy to the Dutch seemed to be suspended. Their gallant conduct in the fight off Beachy Head was loudly applauded. The inac-

tion of Torrington was loudly condemned. London set the example of concert and of exertion. The irritation produced by the late election at once subsided. All distinctions of party disappeared. The Lord Mayor was summoned to attend the Queen. She requested him to ascertain as soon as possible what the capital would undertake to do if the enemy should venture to make a descent. He called together the representatives of the wards; conferred with them, and returned to Whitehall to report that they had unanimously bound themselves to stand by the Government with life and fortune; that a hundred thousand pounds were ready to be paid into the Exchequer; that ten thousand Londoners, well armed and appointed, were prepared to march at an hour's notice; and that an additional force, consisting of six regiments of foot, a strong regiment of horse, and a thousand dragoons, should be instantly raised without costing the Crown a farthing. Of Her Majesty the city had nothing to ask, but that she would be pleased to set over these troops officers in whom she could confide. The same spirit was shown in every part of the country. Though in the southern counties the harvest was at hand, the rustics repaired with unusual cheerfulness to the musters of the militia. The Jacobite country gentlemen, who had, during several months, been making preparations for the general rising which was to take place as soon as William was gone, and as help arrived from France, now that William was gone, now that a French invasion was hourly expected, burned their commissions signed by James, and hid their arms behind wainscots or in haystacks. The Jacobites in the towns were insulted wherever they appeared, and were forced to shut themselves up in their houses from the exasperated populace.*

The battle of the Hogue, won by the united fleets of England and Holland, destroyed all hopes of a Jacobite restoration. The Dutch coined a medal

* Macaulay's *Hist. of England*, Vol. III., p. 609 to 623.

representing the French line-of-battle ships ruined and dispersed, with this motto from Virgil:—

Maturate fugam, regique hæc dicite vestro :
Non illi imperium pelagi, sævumque tridentem ;
Sed mihi sorte datum.

The war which William had undertaken in assertion of his title to the crown of England was concluded by the peace of Ryswick. Lewis acknowledged his right, and promised to recognise no other sovereign. But Lewis was incapable of good faith, and blind to the most obvious dictates of prudence. On the approaching death of James, prevailed upon by the tears of his wife, and the flatteries of Madame de Maintenon, the vain monarch proclaimed James III. King of England.

The anger of the English people was intense. And here I borrow a vivid picture of national indignation at the fraud, perfidy, and presumption of the French king:—

‘As-soon as Lewis was again at Marli,’ says Macaulay, ‘he repeated to the Court assembled there the announcement which he had made at St. Germain’s. The whole circle broke forth into exclamations of delight and admiration. What piety! What humanity! What magnanimity! Nor was this enthusiasm altogether feigned; for in the estimation of the greater part of that brilliant crowd nations were nothing and princes everything. What could be more generous, more amiable, than to protect an innocent boy, who was kept out of his rightful inheritance by an ambitious kinsman? The fine gentlemen and fine ladies who talked thus forgot that, besides the innocent boy and that ambitious kinsman, five millions and a half of Englishmen were concerned, who

were little disposed to consider themselves as the absolute property of any master, and who were still less disposed to accept a master chosen for them by the French king.

‘James lingered three days longer. He was occasionally sensible during a few minutes, and during one of these lucid intervals faintly expressed his gratitude to Lewis. On the sixteenth he died. His Queen retired that evening to the nunnery of Chaillot, where she could weep and pray undisturbed. She left St. Germain’s in joyous agitation. A herald made his appearance before the palace gate, and, with sound of trumpet, proclaimed in Latin, French, and English, King James the Third of England and Eighth of Scotland. The streets, in consequence doubtless of orders from the Government, were illuminated; and the townsmen with loud shouts wished a long reign to their illustrious neighbour. The poor lad received from his ministers, and delivered back to them, the seals of their offices, and held out his hand to be kissed. One of the first acts of his mock reign was to bestow some mock peerages in conformity with directions which he found in his father’s will. Middleton, who as yet had no English title, was created Earl of Monmouth. Perth, who had stood high in the favour of his late master, both as an apostate from the Protestant religion, and as the author of the last improvements on the thumb-screw, took the title of Duke.

‘Meanwhile the remains of James were escorted in the dusk of the evening by a slender retinue to the chapel of the English Benedictines at Paris, and deposited there, in the vain hope that at some future time they would be laid with kingly pomp at Westminster, among the graves of the Plantagenets and Tudors.

‘Three days after these humble obsequies, Lewis visited St. Germain’s in form. On the morrow the visit was returned. The French Court was now at Versailles; and the Pretender was received there in all points as his father would have been, sate in his father’s arm-chair, took, as his father had always done, the right hand of the great monarch,

and wore the long violet-coloured mantle, which was by ancient usage the mourning garb of the Kings of France. There was on that day a great concourse of ambassadors and envoys, but one well-known figure was wanting. Manchester had sent off to Loo intelligence of the affront which had been offered to his country and his master, had solicited instructions, and had determined that, till these instructions should arrive, he would live in strict seclusion. He did not think that he should be justified in quitting his post without express orders; but his earnest hope was that he should be directed to turn his back in contemptuous defiance on the Court which had dared to treat England as a subject province.

‘As soon as the fault into which Lewis had been hurried, by pity, by the desire of applause, and by female influence, was complete and irreparable, he began to feel serious uneasiness. His ministers were directed to declare everywhere that their master had no intention of affronting the English Government, that he had not violated the Treaty of Ryswick, that he had no intention of violating it, that he had merely meant to gratify an unfortunate family nearly related to himself, by using names and observing forms which really meant nothing, and that he was resolved not to countenance any attempt to subvert the throne of William. Torcy who had a few days before proved, by irrefragable arguments, that his master could not without a gross breach of contract recognise the Pretender, imagined that sophisms which had not imposed on himself might possibly impose on others. He visited the English Embassy, obtained admittance, and, as was his duty, did his best to excuse the fatal act, which he had done his best to prevent. Manchester’s answer to this attempt at explanation was as strong and plain as it could be in the absence of precise instructions. The instructions speedily arrived. The courier who carried the news of the recognition to Loo, arrived there when William was at table with some of his nobles, and some princes of the German empire, who had visited him in his retreat. The king said

not a word, but his pale cheek flushed, and he pulled his hat over his eyes to conceal the changes of his countenance. He hastened to send off several messengers. One carried a letter commanding Manchester to quit France without taking leave. Another started for London with a despatch which directed the Lords Justices to send Poussin instantly out of England.

‘England was already in a flame, when it was first known there that James was dying. Some of his eager partisans formed plans and made preparations for a great public manifestation of feeling in different parts of the island. But the insolence of Lewis produced a burst of public indignation which scarcely any malcontent had the courage to face.

‘In the city of London, indeed, some zealots, who had probably swallowed too many bumpers to their new sovereign, played one of those senseless pranks which were characteristic of their party. They dressed themselves in coats bearing some resemblance to the tabards of heralds, rode through the streets, halted at some places, and muttered something which nobody could understand. It was at first supposed that they were merely a company of prize-fighters from Hockley-in-the-Hole who had taken this way of advertising their performances with back sword, sword and buckler, and single falchion. But it was soon discovered that these gaudily dressed horsemen were proclaiming James the Third. In an instant the pageant was at an end. The mock kings-at-arms and pursuivants threw away their finery and fled for their lives in all directions, followed by yells and showers of stones. Already the Common Council of London had met, and had voted, without one dissentient voice, an address expressing the highest resentment at the insult which France had offered to the king and the kingdom. A few hours after this address had been presented to the Regents, the Livery assembled to choose a Lord Mayor. Duncombe, the Tory candidate, lately the popular favourite, was rejected, and a Whig alderman placed in the chair. All over the

kingdom, corporations, grand juries, meetings of magistrates, meetings of freeholders, were passing resolutions breathing affection to William and defiance to Lewis. It was necessary to enlarge the "London Gazette" from four columns to twelve; and even twelve were too few to hold the multitude of loyal and patriotic addresses. In some of these addresses severe reflections were thrown on the House of Commons. Our deliverer had been ungratefully requited, thwarted, mortified, denied the means of making the country respected and feared by neighbouring States. The factious wrangling, the penny-wise economy, of these disgraceful years, had produced the effect which might have been expected. His Majesty would never have been so grossly affronted abroad, if he had not first been affronted at home. But the eyes of his people were opened. He had only to appeal from the representatives to the constituents, and he would find that the nation was still sound at heart.

Poussin had been directed to offer to the Lords Justices explanations similar to those with which Torcy had attempted to appease Manchester. A memorial was accordingly drawn up and presented to Vernon; but Vernon refused to look at it. Soon a courier arrived from Loo, with the letter in which William directed his vicegerents to send the French agent out of the kingdom. An officer of the royal household was charged with the execution of the order. He repaired to Poussin's lodgings, but Poussin was not at home; he was supping at the Blue Posts, a tavern much frequented by Jacobites—the very tavern, indeed, at which Charnock and his gang had breakfasted on the day fixed for the murderous ambuscade of Turnham Green. To this house the messenger went; and there he found Poussin at table with three of the most virulent Tory members of the House of Commons—Tredenham, who returned himself for South Mawes; Hammond, who had been sent to Parliament by the high churchmen of the University of Cambridge; and Davenant, who had recently, at Poussin's suggestion, been rewarded by Lewis, for some savage invectives against the

Whigs, with a diamond ring worth 3,000 pistoles. The supper party was during some weeks the chief topic of conversation. The exultation of the Whigs was boundless. These, then, were the true English patriots—the men who could not endure a foreigner, the men who would not suffer His Majesty to bestow a moderate reward on the foreigners who had stormed Athlone, and turned the flank of the Celtic army at Aughrim. It now appeared they could be on excellent terms with a foreigner, provided only that he was the emissary of a tyrant hostile to the liberty, the independence, and the religion of their country. The Tories, vexed and abashed, heartily wished that on that unlucky day their friends had been supping somewhere else. Even the bronze of Davenant's forehead was not proof to the general reproach. He defended himself by pretending that Poussin—with whom he had passed whole days, who had corrected his scurrilous pamphlets, and who had paid him his shameful wages—was a stranger to him, and that the meeting at the Blue Posts was purely accidental. If his word was doubted, he was willing to repeat his assertion on oath. The public, however, which had formed a very correct notion of his character, thought that his word was worth as much as his oath, and that his oath was worth nothing.

‘Meanwhile the arrival of William was impatiently expected. From Loo he had gone to Breda, where he had passed some time in reviewing his troops, and in conferring with Marlborough and Heinsius. He had hoped to be in England early in October, but adverse winds detained him three weeks at the Hague. At length, in the afternoon of November 4, it was known in London that he had landed early that morning at Margate. Great preparations were made for welcoming him to his capital on the following day, the thirteenth anniversary of his landing in Devonshire. But a journey across the bridge, and along Cornhill and Cheapside, Fleet Street and the Strand, would have been too great an effort for his enfeebled frame. He accordingly slept at Greenwich, and thence proceeded to Hampton Court, with-

out entering London. His return was, however, celebrated by the populace with every sign of joy and attachment. The bonfires blazed and the gunpowder roared all night. In every parish from Mile End to St. James's was to be seen enthroned on the shoulders of stout Protestant porters, a pope, gorgeous in robes of tinsel and triple crown of pasteboard; and close to the car of his holiness stood a devil with horns, cloven-hoof, and a snaky-tail.

‘Even in his country house, the king could find no refuge from the importunate loyalty of his people. Deputations from cities, counties, universities, besieged him all day. He was, he wrote to Heinsius, quite exhausted by the labour of hearing harangues and returning answers. The whole kingdom meanwhile was looking anxiously towards Hampton Court. Most of the ministers were assembled there. The most eminent men of the party which was out of power had repaired thither to pay their duty to their Sovereign, and to congratulate him on his safe return. It was remarked that Somers and Halifax, so malignantly persecuted, a few months ago by the House of Commons, were received with such marks of esteem and kindness, as William was little in the habit of vouchsafing to his English courtiers. The lower ranks of both the great factions were violently agitated. The Whigs, lately vanquished and dispirited, were full of hope and ardour. The Tories, lately triumphant and secure, were exasperated and alarmed. Both Whigs and Tories waited with intense anxiety for the decision of one momentous and pressing question—Would there be a dissolution? On November 7th, the king propounded that question to his Privy Council. It was rumoured, and is highly probable, that Jersey, Wright, and Hedges advised him to keep the existing Parliament. But they were not men whose opinion was likely to have much weight with him; and Rochester, whose opinion might have had some weight, had set out to take possession of his vice-royalty just before the death of James, and was still at Dublin. William had, however, as he owed to Heinsius, some diffi-

culty in making up his mind. He had no doubt that a general election would give him a better House of Commons; but a general election would cause delay, and delay might cause much mischief. After balancing these considerations during some hours, he determined to dissolve.

‘The writs were sent out with all expedition; and in three days the whole kingdom was up. Never—such was the intelligence sent from the Dutch Embassy to the Hague—had there been more intriguing, more canvassing, more virulence of party feeling. It was in the capital that the first great contests took place. The decisions of the metropolitan constituent bodies were impatiently expected as auguries of the general result. All the pens of Grub Street, all the presses of Little Britain were hard at work. Handbills for and against every candidate were sent to every voter. The popular Slogans on both sides were indefatigably repeated. Presbyterian, Papist, Tool of Holland, Pensioner of France, were the appellations interchanged between the contending factions. The Whig cry was that the Tory members of the last two Parliaments had, from a malignant desire to mortify the king, left the kingdom exposed to danger and insult; had unconstitutionally encroached both on the Legislature and on the judicial functions of the House of Lords; had turned the House of Commons into a new Star Chamber; had used as instruments of capricious tyranny those privileges which ought never to be employed but in defence of freedom; had persecuted without regard to law, to natural justice, or to decorum, the great Commander who had saved the State at La Hogue, the great Financier who had restored the currency and re-established public credit, the great Judge, whom all persons, not blinded by prejudice, acknowledged to be, in virtue, in prudence, in learning and eloquence, the first of living English jurists and statesmen. The Tories answered that they had been only too moderate, only too merciful; that they had used the Speaker’s warrant, and the power of tacking only too sparingly; and that if they

ever again had a majority, the three Whig leaders, who now imagined themselves secure, should be impeached, not for high misdemeanours, but for high treason. It soon appeared that these threats were not likely to be very speedily executed. Four Whig and four Tory candidates contested the city of London. The show of hands was for the Whigs. A poll was demanded; and the Whigs polled nearly two votes to one. Sir John Levison Gower, who was supposed to have ingratiated himself with the whole body of shopkeepers, by some parts of his parliamentary conduct, was put up for Westminster on the Tory interest; and the electors were reminded by puffs in the newspapers of the services which he had rendered to trade. But the dread of the French king, the Pope, and the Pretender, prevailed; and Sir John was at the bottom of the poll. Southwark not only returned Whigs, but gave them instructions of the most whiggish character.

‘In the country parties were more evenly balanced than in the capital. Yet the news from every quarter was that the Whigs had recovered part at least of the ground which they had lost. Wharton had regained his ascendancy in Buckinghamshire. Musgrave was rejected by Westmoreland. Nothing did more harm to the Tory candidates than the story of Poussin’s farewell supper. We learn from their own acrimonious invectives that the unlucky discovery of the three members of Parliament at the Blue Posts cost thirty honest gentlemen their seats. One of the criminals, Tredenham, escaped with impunity; for the dominion of his family over the borough of St. Mawes was absolute even to a proverb. The other two had the fate which they deserved. Davenant ceased to sit for Bedwin. Hammond, who had lately stood high in the favour of the University of Cambridge, was defeated by a great majority, and was succeeded by the glory of the Whig party, Isaac Newton.’*

* Macaulay, Vol. V., pp. 294 to 303.

William died very shortly afterwards, but not before he had concluded treaties, by which he bound himself to act with the Emperor of Germany and the Republic of Holland in defence of the liberties of Europe. No one seemed to doubt that Lewis, with extended territory and augmented armies, would, if not vigorously opposed, overcome the prudence of the Dutch nation, and place the Stuart pretender on the throne of England.*

Queen Anne, however, though a Tory in politics and a bigot in religion, was unwilling to give up her crown to a brother of whose legitimacy she had great doubts, and of whose fraternal affection she had no assurance. She formed a Tory Ministry, and dismissed William's Whig counsellors; but she made Marlborough and Godolphin her chief advisers, and placed in their hands the control of her military and financial affairs. Marlborough was a great statesman and a consummate captain. The faculty to knit together discordant States and form a confederacy of independent princes, which in our day has been displayed by a resolute German Minister, was combined, in the person of Marlborough, with that strategy in the study, and that master-eye in the field of battle; which have in our day exalted the fame of an eminent general, and directed to victory the legions of a King of the House of Hohenzollern. That which Eugene did for Marlborough in the battle of Blenheim, Godolphin did for him in the Treasury. On Godolphin's bust at Althorp is the

* Coxe, *Life of Marlborough*.

inscription, 'Fisci ita peritus ut præter peculatum nihil nesciret.' He was always ready to furnish the means of the most costly war, and he took care by borrowing at six, seven, or eight per cent. at once to provide for an immediate exigency, and to reserve for Walpole the power of reducing the yearly interest of the National Debt tolerable to a future generation.*

It cannot be denied that Marlborough was selfish and immoral in his political conduct ; that, whether to James II. or his son the Pretender, he always professed unshaken attachment ; that he carried on a correspondence with his nephew the Duke of Berwick ; and that, if Bolingbroke had succeeded in placing James III. upon the throne, Marlborough would probably have been glad to secure his titles and his fortune, at the sacrifice of his fidelity to the Protestant succession. But in times of political revolution men are so made : of such a texture were the followers of Pompey, who embraced the fortunes of Cæsar and Augustus ; of such a clay were the ministers of Lewis XVI. and the Jacobins of the Convention who followed the star of Napoleon Bonaparte ; of such variable tempers were Talleyrand, who took thirteen

* It is singular that Pitt, whose financial talents were so loudly trumpeted, pursued the opposite course, and by borrowing in the Three per Cents. at the price of 70, 60, or even 50, has obliged us, the posterity of his own generation, to pay 4, 5, 6, and 6½ per cent., while the posterity of Godolphin paid only 3 per cent. for money which that careful minister borrowed openly at 7 or 8 per cent.—See Coxe's *Life of Pelham*.

oaths of allegiance, and Ney, who left his old master only to desert his new Sovereign.

Ille crucem sceleris pretium tulit, hic diadema.

The brave Ney was shot as a traitor ; Marlborough and Talleyrand died covered with honours. Macaulay himself has said, in his brilliant review of the life of Lord Clive :—

Such men should be judged by their contemporaries as they will be judged by posterity. Their bad actions ought not indeed to be called good ; but their good and bad actions ought to be fairly weighed ; and if, on the whole, the good preponderate, the sentence ought to be one, not merely of acquittal, but of approbation. Not a single great ruler in history can be absolved by a judge who fixes his eye inexorably on one or two unjustifiable acts. Bruce, the deliverer of Scotland, Maurice the deliverer of Germany, William the deliverer of Holland, William, his great descendant, the deliverer of England ; . . . how would the best of them pass such a scrutiny ? History takes wider views.*

I hope so, and Marlborough ought to have the benefit of these wider views.

The victories of Marlborough need not be referred to here. Had he not been thwarted by the Dutch deputies and undermined at home by a palace intrigue, I have little doubt that this great general would have had his quarters at Versailles and have taken Paris. Yet at Gertruydenberg he was too harsh in asking Lewis to make war against his grandson. Had the King of France abandoned the war in

* Macaulay's *Essays*, Vol. III., p. 204.

the Low Countries, Marlborough and Eugene would have overrun Spain in a single summer.

Voltaire, who, in his contempt of human nature, is fond of attributing great events to trifling causes, finds a sufficient origin for the Reformation in a quarrel between the Augustine and Dominican Orders of Friars. In the same spirit he traces the fall of Marlborough and Godolphin to the spilling of a cup of tea. This is nonsense. In fact, although small circumstances are often linked to great events, and may hasten or for years retard them, the causes are to be found deeper: in the progress of opinion, or the decay of institutions; in the weakness of governments or of churches; in the growth of popular bodies, in the power of great men, or in the sudden rise of strong communities. The disgrace of the Duchess of Marlborough was owing to no trifling accident; she owed her influence over Anne to the same cause as the conjuration and mighty magic exercised by Leonora Galigai over Mary of Medicis — to the influence of a strong mind over a weak one.* But when this influence came to be exerted over a queen, the prudent Marlborough could not restrain the imperious, passionate, and ambitious temper of Sarah from conflict with the timid, superstitious and sullen nature of Anne. The Duchess was too angry in her manner, and, above

* 'Comment,' demandait-on un jour à Léonora, 'avez-vous acquis tant d'empire sur votre maîtresse? N'avez-vous pas employé des filtres, de la magie, des moyens surnaturels?' 'Point d'autres,' répondit-elle, 'que l'ascendant qu'ont les âmes fortes sur les âmes foibles.'

all, too whiggish in her opinions. Her son-in-law Sunderland was always aiming at the highest places. His principles, and those of Somers, were very distasteful to the Queen. The total rout of the Whig party in 1710, the triumph of Harley and Bolingbroke, the cry of the Church in danger, the unwise prosecution of Sacheverel, and the creation of twelve Tory peers, to assure to the party a majority in the House of Lords, seemed to portend the fall of constitutional government, and the restoration of the Stuarts.

For there was a deep and impassable chasm at this time between the Whig and Tory parties. This chasm divided Somers, Halifax, Sunderland, and Wharton, from Bolingbroke, Bathurst and Harcourt. The Whigs, although personally friendly to the clergy, insisted on the toleration granted by the laws, and were politically favourable to the Protestant Dissenters. They were thorough partisans of the Hanover succession. In Government they looked to the prevalence of their party in the two Houses of Parliament, and prepared to found power on the confidence placed by a majority of the House of Commons in Ministers holding office and seats in Parliament.

The Tories wished to exclude placemen from the House of Commons, and to make the Ministers of the Crown independent of Parliament. Parliament was to be a check on abuses of power, but not a channel through which Ministers were to govern. A provision that a Minister, on accepting office, was to vacate his seat, but be capable of re-election, was

adopted as a compromise, and was known by the name of West's Expedient. Had the Tories succeeded completely in their views, civil discord must have been the result. The favourite Minister of the King would have tried, like Strafford, to subvert law and liberty; eloquent and powerful members of Parliament would have endeavoured, like Pym and Hampden, to bring him to the block. In the reign of the second Charles, the monarch had been successful, and had Queen Anne lived to support Bolingbroke for one or two years, there can be little doubt that at her death he would have restored the Stuarts, and would have endeavoured to mould the House of Commons to passive obedience. 'Never,' says Clarendon, 'did the plant of royal bounty grow in the bosom of a Stuart or a Bourbon.' Had James III. sat on the throne, he would have oppressed his people and brought on another revolution.

Thus it must ever have been under the government of the Stuarts, until civil war should close by the triumph of a despotism or the victory of a commonwealth. The issue was not tried upon the death of Anne, owing to a very narrow sequence of events. Bolingbroke became a deadly enemy of Harley. He complained that he was not, like Harley, made an earl. He complained of Harley's indolence, and of his jests, which savoured of the Inns of Court; but secretly, and above all, he hated him for his steady attachment to the Protestant succession. Harley was a moderate Tory, and had he declared for the House of Hanover, would have been supported by

Marlborough and Godolphin. But Bolingbroke, by his plausible eloquence, and his adroit spirit of intrigue, prevailed on the Queen to discard his rival, and favour the succession of her brother. The result is told in a few words by Bolingbroke.

Bolingbroke wrote to Dean Swift on August 6, 1714:—

‘DEAR DEAN,—the Earl of Oxford was removed on Tuesday. The Queen died on Sunday. What a world is this, and how does fortune banter us!’*

The event was announced in a different spirit, and in a different manner by a popular dissenting minister. On the same Sunday, which has been already referred to as the day of the Queen’s death, an old Nonconformist minister, very much depressed by the prospect of the triumph of High Church principles in the passing of the Schism Bill, was walking across Smithfield to his chapel in Holborn, when he was overtaken by a carriage, driving rapidly, with a bishop inside, who called to him. It was Burnet, who, like most of the prelates of that time, was on familiar terms with the leading Dissenters. ‘Why are you so sad?’ asked the bishop. He replied, ‘What has just passed makes me fear that my brethren and I shall have to take part with the Protestant martyrs, whose ashes are under our feet.’ ‘Take heart,’ said the bishop: ‘I am going as fast as I can to Kensington; the Queen is dying; if, on my arrival, I find that she is dead, I will send a messenger to your chapel, who shall wave a white hand-

* Swift’s Works, Scott’s edition.

kerchief from the gallery.' The old minister went in. He began and finished the prayers; he began the sermon. In the middle of the sermon the messenger appeared and waved the handkerchief. The minister finished the sermon. He then said, 'I have to ask you to give thanks to Almighty God for a great deliverance. The Queen is dead. God save King George I!' This was the first proclamation of the House of Hanover.*

Since the death of Queen Anne on August 1, 1714, England has enjoyed more than a century and a half of singular freedom and growing prosperity. Walpole, far from being jealous of a colleague who was an earl, said with feigned humility after many years of power, 'I accused of ambition! I who refused a white staff and an earldom!' Being endowed with great sagacity, he saw very clearly that the centre of gravity of the constitution was transferred to the House of Commons. When at length defeated, he accepted a seat in the House of Lords; he there went up to his great rival Pulteney, recently created Earl of Bath, and with happy irony said to him, 'You and I, my lord, are now two of the most insignificant fellows in the kingdom.' The satirist of the day had already sung, 'Great Earl of Bath your reign is o'er.' Since Walpole the House of Commons has been the seat of power. The first Pitt governed the country while he remained in the House of Commons as Secretary of State. Charles Fox pursued a similar course. Lord North, the younger Pitt, Perceval, and

* See Skeats's *History of Free Churches*.

Peel sat in the House of Commons as First Lords of the Treasury. Since the accession of the House of Hanover, no one has held the office of Lord High Treasurer.

Walpole took the conduct of foreign affairs into his own hands. Peace and an intimate alliance with France were the guiding maxims of his foreign policy.

Of the war with Spain, into which he was forced by the clamour got up by the Opposition, Burke says :—

Some years after it was my fortune to converse with many of the principal actors against that Minister, and with those who principally excited that clamour. None of them, no not one, did in the least defend the measure, or attempt to justify their conduct, which they so freely condemned, as they would have done in commenting upon any proceeding in history in which they were totally unconcerned. Thus it will be. They who stir up the people to improper desires, *whether of peace or war*, will be condemned by themselves. They who weakly yield to them will be condemned by history.*

It may be true, as Burke says, that Walpole failed to put forth the whole strength of his case, and weakly yielded to the arguments of the Opposition. But his entering into war was justified by the conduct of the Court of Madrid, which, irritated by the clamour in England, put itself quite as much in the wrong as the English Opposition had been in the origin of the dispute. The King of Spain, in his turn provoked, had complained that a British fleet was stationed in the Mediterranean, and finally announced

* *Thoughts on a Regicide Peace.*

his determination to make war upon England. Walpole could not refuse a challenge thus openly given, and could not be blamed for defending the terms of peace which he had himself laid down. He could neither recall the British fleet nor renounce the convention of which he was the author.

What may be truly said of him is, that while he did not seek for glory, he managed by peace and prudence to establish the House of Hanover on the throne. In accomplishing this task he gave a secure basis to our free Constitution. While he refused to repeal the Test and Corporation Act, or to provoke the active enmity of the Church, he took care to protect the religious liberty of the subject. By what is improperly termed the Toleration Act the Protestant dissenters of England were already established.* They were secured by law in their rights of public worship, and of educating their children. Ministers were most unwilling to disturb the general freedom. 'I know,' said Walpole, on a foolish speech of Sir Willam Wyndham, 'that the Hon. Baronet expects me to move that he shall be sent to the Tower, but I shall do no such thing.'

The great lights of the preceding generation were by this time extinguished. Johnson could say with truth—

From Marlborough's eyes the tears of dotage flow,
And Swift expires a driveller and a show.

* See Lord Mansfield's Judgment, delivered in the House of Lords, 1768.

But though the arm of valour was paralysed, and the star of wit sunk below the horizon, the people of England were assured in the enjoyment of personal and political liberty, with freedom for every man to think what he pleased and say what he thought to a degree unknown on the continent of Europe, or in England in any previous age. The precept *Quieta non movete*, which was adopted by Walpole, was a severe restraint upon any passion for aggrandisement and upon the love of glory, but it suited very well with the easy and jovial character of a statesman who was content with making Old England happy, and with leaving New England to work her way to freedom and greatness without taxing and tormenting a rising people. During this period the House of Commons rose in importance, and of Walpole it might be said, as Lucan has said of Pompey,

Rectorque senatûs
Sed regnantis erat.

The husbandry of Walpole, and the growing wealth of the nation, enabled Chatham, when England drifted into the war of 1756, to conduct it happily and gloriously.

France, having been forced by the Treaty of Utrecht and subsequent engagements to renounce all protection of the House of Stuart, and all claim to dispose of the throne of England, attempted in the Seven Years' War to struggle for dominion in America and in India. In America, France, having

the mouths of the Mississippi and the St. Lawrence, hoped to wedge the British colonists into a limited space and a very narrow sovereignty. Had not she been confronted by a man of the genius of Chatham, she would probably have succeeded, and the French troops, overrunning New England and the back settlements, would have dispersed and destroyed the provincial forces commanded by Braddon and Washington. But Chatham took measures which defeated French aggression. He sent to Canada General Wolfe, who at the price of his life conquered that noble province. But he took a still more effectual security. He furnished ample subsidies to Frederic of Prussia, who routed the armies of France near her own frontier. Chatham himself said, 'I have conquered America in Germany.'

The truth of these words may be proved by historical documents. I will make some references to the Parliamentary History of Hansard, which will be sufficient for the purpose.

On May 11, 1756, the King sent a message to the House of Commons, announcing that he had made a treaty with Prussia. On the 13th of the same month, 1,000,000*l.* were voted to enable the Crown to defeat the enemy's designs, and on the 17th of the same month the Commons voted 20,000*l.* more to enable the King to fulfil his engagements with Prussia. This treaty was opposed by Pitt; but in February 1757, Pitt being then Secretary of State, and the treaty of January 1756 having been

referred to a Committee of Supply, they came to the following resolution :—

That a sum not exceeding 200,000*l.* be granted to His Majesty to assist him in forming and maintaining during the present year an army of observation, for the just and necessary defence and preservation of His Majesty's electoral dominions, and those of his allies, and towards enabling His Majesty to fulfil his engagements with the King of Prussia, for the security of the empire against the irruption of foreign armies, and for the support of the common cause.*

In 1758 the Commons granted 861,600*l.* on a vote of credit, and at the end of the session the King said to his Parliament:—

His Majesty has cemented the union between him and his good brother the King of Prussia, by new engagements with which you have been already fully acquainted.

In 1759 the Commons voted 60,000 men and 14,845 marines for the navy, and for operations by land a body of troops amounting to 52,543 effectives, besides the auxiliaries of Hanover, Hesse, Brunswick, Saxe Gotha, and Brandenburg, to the number of 50,000 men. A million was likewise voted on a vote of credit. Pitt now treated his opponents with great haughtiness. Horace Walpole, likening the debates in Parliament to the proceedings on the Stock Exchange, says: 'Though the Parliament is met, no politicks are come to town; one may describe the House of Commons like the price of stocks—debates, nothing done; votes, under par; patriots, no price; oratory books, shut.'

* *Parl. Hist.*, Vol. XV., p. 783.

In 1761 a new treaty was made, and new subsidies promised to Prussia. Thus Mr. Pitt fulfilled his intention of conquering America in Germany. France, busied at home, had no troops to send to Louisiana or Canada. The foreign policy of England gave her the possession of Canada at the peace. Nothing but ignorance can have induced some persons to represent the British victories in North America as due entirely to the efforts of the colonists, and their unaided exertions.

In the East Indies similar success crowned the British arms. The French forces were ably led, but the valour and enterprise of Clive secured for his country the laurels which the commanders of Lewis expected to win.

At the end of the war, and when the treaty of peace was ready for signature, Mr. Wood, the Under-Secretary, brought it to Lord Granville, the President of the Council, then sinking into the grave:—

‘I found him so languid,’ says Mr. Wood, in his *Essay On Homer*, ‘that I preferred postponing my business for another time; but he insisted that I should stay, saying it could not prolong his life to neglect his duty. He then desired to hear the treaty read, to which he listened with great attention, and recovered spirits enough to declare the approbation of a dying statesman (I use his own words), on the most glorious war and the most honourable peace this nation ever saw.’*

The American war, the seeds of which were sown soon after the German war closed, was not in its

* *Essay on the original Genius and Writings of Homer.*

principal features connected with foreign policy, and was rather terminated than carried on by the hostility of France. I wish only to remark that even the statesmen and the sovereign most engaged in it were by no means eager in its support. When Lord Gower resigned, thinking the success of the war hopeless, Lord North avowed that since 1779 he had held the same opinion as Lord Gower. Even George III. recommended to his Ministers that the British troops should be recalled from North America, and that all the warlike efforts of the British nation should be directed against France. The Duke of Richmond and Charles Fox declared in 1778 in favour of recognising the independence of the Congress of North America. Fox would have willingly served under Lord Weymouth as Prime Minister, provided the evacuation of the North American provinces by the British troops were ordered. But Sir Gilbert Elliot has left on record his opinion that even the royal authority could not have sustained a Ministry which at that period acknowledged American independence. In fact, the recognition of the revolted colonies as a new and independent state was retarded by the obstinacy and pride of the British nation much more than by the resistance of the Sovereign and the folly of the Minister.

Thus we have arrived at the eve of the French Revolution, which scattered to the winds all previous systems of policy and all subsisting connections of party. It may be convenient in this place to give a summary of the foreign policy of the British

Government, from the time of the establishment of free institutions by the Revolution of 1689.

I have shown that the wars against France undertaken by King William were entered into and maintained for the national purposes of having on the throne a Sovereign of our own choice instead of a Viceroy of France; of preserving personal and political liberty, and of allowing Protestant Dissenters the right of worship in their own chapels, without restriction or penalty. These positions are easily established by a few references to unquestionable authorities.

The despatches of Barillon unveil completely the policy of the Stuart kings, Charles and James. They likewise show partially and by snatches the conduct of the popular party during these reigns. The objects of Charles and James did not essentially differ, though they were not equally active in pursuit of them. They both maintained that the Habeas Corpus Act was fatal to the due authority of the Crown, and ought not to be observed. In order to attain the end of dispensing with the laws, they both held that the King ought not to live in dependence upon his Parliament, and that the only security he could have for his just authority was a pension from the French king sufficient to absolve him from the necessity of calling Parliament together. The brothers likewise agreed that the Roman Catholic religion ought to be the religion of the State, and that dissenters from the State Church ought not to

be allowed any freedom, either in the pulpit or in schools.

It was from this slavery that King William, and the House of Hanover, Somers, Halifax and Walpole rescued the people of England. The nation gladly welcomed their deliverers, and fought with a courage and success which enabled Marlborough and Chatham to carry on glorious wars, and force the French King to banish the Stuart pretenders from his dominions. The triumph of the Whig cause was assured in Europe, America, and Asia.

A new war was produced by the resistance of the thirteen provinces of North America to the unjust exactions of George Grenville, and the heedless folly of Charles Townshend. But at the peace of 1783 England was in a state to recover from her losses, and, by the wise policy of William Pitt, her disordered finances were regulated, and her position in Europe recovered.

In entering upon a new period, it may be well to note that the language of our day differs much from that employed before the French Revolution. Thus in politics, what was formerly called Despotism is now called Personal Government ; and what was called Freedom, or Free Government, is now called Parliamentary Government.

II.

THE great war, commonly called the French Revolutionary War, was filled with memorable events, and produced memorable consequences. It lasted, not taking into account the peace of Amiens and the short interval between the accession of Lewis XVIII. and the hundred days, more than twenty-two years. The National Debt of the United Kingdom was increased from about 240 millions to nearly 900 millions, an augmentation of 660 millions.

Mr. Pitt, the powerful Prime Minister, had shown a remarkable want of foresight both before and during the war. In 1792, in bringing forward his budget, he declared his conviction that England had never enjoyed a fairer prospect of fifteen years of peace. After the war commenced he expressed confidently to his colleagues and intimate friends his opinion that it would be of short duration.* But, at length, when the war had extended its ravages and swallowed its victims, Pitt perceived he had been wanting in foresight. It has been truly said, however, by a serious author, experience is never borrowed, but always bought.† Other Ministers of England who aspire to the fortitude and patriotism

* Canning's Speeches.

† Mason, On Self-Knowledge.

of Pitt should beware lest they copy his unwise security and improvident parsimony.

It was not in the contemplation of Pitt to make war against France. Nor is it probable that any internal disorders, or even the judicial murder of the King, would have induced the calm and reforming Minister to incur the hazards and the cost of hostilities against France. Three changes in the state of Europe shook his determination, and finally carried him into the rapid tide of the Revolution, to strive against it without success, to be the most hated of the enemies of France, and the most egregious dupe of his own allies.

The first of these was the rise of the Girondist party, composed of men of extraordinary eloquence, but aspiring to objects only to be attained by the destruction of the French Monarchy, and by a crusade on behalf of democracy flooding every country in Europe. This party imagined itself destined to open a new era for the benefit, the happiness, and the enlightenment of mankind. Its success was great, when with brilliant declamation it assailed the unhappy Lewis, and with impetuous courage attacked a victim already fallen to the ground and bound for sacrifice. But behind this party stood Robespierre, Danton, and their accomplices, who, when they had beheaded the Sovereign, and declared war on the Continental Powers, found no difficulty in sending to the guillotine the Girondist promoters of a bloody revolution and a desolating war.

The second cause which hastened on this destructive war was the position already occupied by France.

She had not only repelled from her soil her German invaders, but had conquered the greater part of the Austrian Netherlands. When in a similar posture of affairs, Sir William Temple had in the name of Charles II. invited the statesmen of Holland to call upon Lewis XIV. to relinquish his conquests, De Witt had rejoined that although such a proposal at an earlier period might have been practicable, yet after the triumphant progress of the French arms he thought it far more prudent to prevent her from making any further conquests, but to leave her in possession of the territory already acquired.*

Had Pitt been as wise and as experienced a statesman as De Witt, he might have followed a similar course. It was not probable that a young republic flushed with success, and exulting in the hope of future victories, would be more moderate than Lewis in the pride of his ambitious career. Had Pitt interfered before the armies of Dumouriez entered Belgium, or had he lowered his demands in proportion to the lateness of his interference, he might have been successful. But his mind was too unbending, and his knowledge of foreign affairs too limited to admit of wise concession for the sake of permanent peace. The ultimatum of England was, therefore, conveyed in a despatch of Lord Grenville dated Dec. 31, 1792. In this despatch Lord Grenville says:—

This Government, adhering to the maxims which it has followed for more than a century, will also never see with indifference, that France shall make herself, either directly

* See *Ante*, p. 8.

or indirectly, sovereign of the Low Countries, or general arbitress of the rights and liberties of Europe. If France is really desirous of maintaining friendship and peace with England, she must show herself disposed to renounce her views of aggression and aggrandisement, and to confine herself within her own territory without insulting other governments, without disturbing their tranquillity, without violating their rights.*

Considering that the Government of England had seen the armies of Austria and Prussia advance into the heart of Champagne in order to punish the French Assembly and the French civil authorities authorised by law, and had even viewed their progress with some favour, it was rather too much to ask, when the invasion had been repelled and the invaders defeated, that the French should confine themselves within their own territory, and not retaliate on a province of their enemy. To stop further aggressions was the utmost that could fairly be pretended. But, unfortunately, in 1792, when the Duke of Brunswick made his wicked invasion, Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville were persuaded that England could avoid interference.

Mr. Cobden says of Lord Grenville's remonstrance, 'It would have added much to the force of this remonstrance if a similar tone had been taken a year earlier, when the famous Declaration of Pilnitz was published.†

The third cause of war, although the least reason-

* *Parl. Hist.*, Vol. XXX. p. 258.

† Cobden's *Political Writings*, Vol. I., p. 400.

able, was that which in England was the most prevailing. On January 21, 1793, the head of Lewis XVI. fell upon the scaffold. This cruel act excited horror and indignation everywhere. But as a punishment inflicted on a constitutional king, however unmerited, it was the right of the French people to behead Lewis XVI. as it was the right of the English people to behead Charles I. When England put her king to death, the Governments of France and Spain became only the more anxious to conciliate the favour of Cromwell. Pitt, however, either infected by the fury of Burke, or struck with the expediency of taking advantage of the popular sentiment, at once dismissed M. Maret, the French diplomatic agent, and refused all further intercourse with the chiefs of the French Executive. The French Assembly, already full of resentment at the unfriendly behaviour of the English Government, was moved to anger at the interference of England in the internal affairs of France, and at once declared war.

A calmer temper, and a juster appreciation of the miseries of war, would have induced a minister of England to do more to avoid so great a calamity as a war undertaken with all the forces of England against the Jacobin Convention, armed with all the forces of France.

Alison, the historian, has attributed the war of 1793, on the part of England, to a policy similar to that of Henry IV. :—

Be it thy care to busy giddy minds
With foreign quarrels, that action hence borne out
May waste the memory of former days.

Only instead of the memory of former days, Alison, after remarking that 'the desire of power under the name of reform was rapidly gaining ground among the middle ranks,' and that 'the institutions of the country were threatened with an overthrow as violent as that which had recently taken place in the French monarchy,' adds: 'In those circumstances the only mode of checking the evil was by engaging in a foreign contest, by drawing off the ardent spirits into active service, and in lieu of the modern desire for innovation, rousing the ancient gallantry of the British nation.'*

There are two answers to this vindication of Pitt's great war: first, there is no ground for the assertion that the desire for reform was so rapidly gaining ground among the middle ranks that there was danger of a violent overthrow of the institutions of the country. On the contrary, the wise administration of Pitt had so far satisfied the public mind that there was no call even for his own moderate plan of parliamentary reform, and that since 1786, he had not thought it worth his while to press that subject on the attention of the House of Commons. Secondly, to inflict hostilities on France, and prevent her settlement of her own institutions, in order that ours might not be exposed to danger, was a policy as unjust and wicked as it was likely to be costly and calamitous.

A far wiser policy for Great Britain in 1793

* Alison, Vol. IV., p. 7.

would have been a firm and liberal administration of domestic affairs, and a powerful armed neutrality in foreign affairs. We should thus have avoided the taint of the ambitious projects, the despotic theories, the perfidy, and the covetousness of the decrepid governments of the continent of Europe.

Let us observe the circumstances favourable to such a policy, and all the evils wantonly incurred by following an opposite course. The means of carrying on a maritime war on the part of England were in 1793 far superior to those of France. The flag of France had at that time nearly disappeared from the seas. The French navy, at the commencement of the war, consisted of 82 ships of the line, and 77 frigates, besides smaller ships of war; Great Britain, on the other hand, had 129 ships of the line fit for sea, besides 24 guard-ships, and 100 frigates: 90 of each class were speedily put in commission.* The victory of the 1st of June, gained by Lord Howe, speedily showed that Britannia still ruled the waves, and that, if she had chosen in 1793 the character and conduct of an armed neutrality, she would have saved treasure beyond counting and lives beyond price.

In contrast to her naval superiority, the alliances of England on the Continent displayed weakness, discord, and conflicting pretensions. Austria and Prussia, while affecting great zeal to save Lewis XVI. and put down Jacobin rule in Paris, were far more eager to obtain increase of territory for themselves

* Alison, Vol. III., p. 378.

than to save the life of their royal brother, or to arrest the progress of democracy in France. A provisional agreement was made at Mayence by which the two great German Powers agreed in principle that an accession of territory obtained by the one should be balanced by an equal share to accrue to the other. But the practical application of this principle was as difficult as it is to make a fair division of plunder among robbers. Prussia pretended to a large share of Poland; Austria asked that Prussia should yield Bareith and Anspach in compensation. This proposal Prussia at once rejected. A notion of these difficulties may be gathered from the account of a celebrated interview between the King of Prussia and some diplomatic agents of Austria, when the Prussian army had reached the French frontier on its return from the passes of Argonne.

The King was at Merle, a village close to the gates of Luxemburg, when he received the Austrian envoys, Spielmann, Mercy, and Thugut. Were his thoughts entirely bent on giving freedom to Lewis, on restoring authority in France, and on arresting the rapid progress of democracy, which threatened to destroy social order in Europe? Far from it: his first thought was how he could procure a larger share of territory for Prussia than was to be annexed to Austria. He therefore rejected at once the cession of Bareith and Anspach, and demanded a larger share of Poland, in case of his raising more than 20,000 men for the French war. Spielmann argued that equality in respect to acquisitions had always been

laid down as the basis of agreement between the two Powers ; how, then, could Prussia ask for a whole Polish province for herself, while Austria, even if she exchanged Belgium for Bavaria, would not obtain the addition of a square mile of territory ? Haugwitz replied that this was not a war made on the part of two Powers equally endangered : Austria alone was attacked, and if Prussia offered help of her own free will, she was entitled to an indemnity in proportion to her voluntary exertions. ‘ This,’ cried Spielmann, ‘ is something quite new ; this is the grave of all alliances.’ Haugwitz produced, in reply, a map of Poland where a large portion of Polish territory, double the size of the portion marked at Mayence, was drawn out in the King of Prussia’s own hand, as the new Prussian province of Poland.

Such was, in fact, as Spielmann said, the grave of the German alliance. The Emperor of Austria and King of Prussia were far more intent on the aggrandisement of their respective states, than on the restoration of peace and social order in France. But while these two weak monarchs hesitated and squabbled, at one time praying Russia to help them to despoil Poland, and at another time stretching out their hands to grasp money from the British Treasury, the supposed object of the war was forgotten. Francis of Austria cared little for the King and Queen of France, his near relations, provided he could secure the fortresses of Valenciennes and Condé for himself ; the King of Prussia, supposed to be the Sovereign in

Europe the most sincerely intent upon crushing revolution, was quite ready to clutch at large subsidies from England, with the alleged design to carry into effect the anti-Jacobin views of Burke; but when he had got the money he employed it in transporting his army to Poland, and occupying the Polish provinces which he had marked on the map as his own portion of the plunder.

It is well observed by Machiavel that wicked men fail, not so much from their extreme depravity, as from the hesitations, doubts, and scruples, which beset their course. Catherine of Russia had none of these obstacles in her way: cruelty, treachery, hypocrisy, greediness, were as undiluted in her public policy as licentiousness in her private life.

Burke, who wished to see the throne of the Bourbons restored, and Pitt, who was bent on preserving Belgium from French aggression, were equally foiled and perplexed at this new complexion of affairs. Pitt had great talents as an orator and a rhetorician, but he had none of that genius which shone in every speech and act of Chatham. His inflexible resolution was admirable, and saved England from peril in the dark days of 1797, when the Bank could not pay in gold, and the Mutiny of the Nore threatened to deprive the nation of its right arm. But in the crisis of 1793, when France was in a state of frenzy, the determination to refuse any concession in Belgium, and the policy of bribing the Continental Powers to send their armies to defend the Low Countries, could produce nothing but

discord and disaster. Let us examine a little further the state of that part of the Continent left untouched by the troubles of France.

Leopold, Emperor of Germany, was a wise and cautious sovereign. As ruler of Tuscany he had promoted freedom of trade, and had made some advances towards religious liberty. In his difficult position as Emperor of Germany, he strove to maintain peace, declared he would not make war except in defence of his own dominions, and was well inclined to be on friendly terms with France in her new shape as a constitutional monarchy. But at a critical moment Leopold died, and Francis, his successor, was more disposed to follow the footsteps of his rash and ambitious uncle, than those of his cautious and reflecting father.

Catherine, Empress of Russia, saw very clearly that the sovereigns of Austria and Prussia were beggars at her door, and that Poland was a loaf in her hand, to be doled out to the hungry supplicant she might choose to prefer.

Catherine had no predilections in favour of either monarch: indeed, in politics, as in love, men were her playthings, whom she attracted or repelled, favoured or jilted, as it suited her present convenience or her transient passion. Although she had many lovers, no one ever gained her heart; although she employed many Ministers, no one ever governed her mind. She nourished the turbulent parties in Poland, and when they imagined they might rely on her support she crushed them, and reduced them to dust. She

tempted the ambition of the King of Prussia with the bait of a large share of Polish territory, and when he hung back and pretended that no farther partition should take place, she rebuked his pretended unselfishness with an exposure, of which he did not venture to deny the truth. It was thus that Catherine held with a firm hand the balance between Austria and Prussia.

On the 28th of November, 1794, the King of Prussia sanctioned a Note, by which he asked for a large territory in Poland, and especially Cracow, as part of the Prussian share in the third partition. The Note concluded, 'If this settlement is not to be obtained, Prussia would prefer the continuance of the arrangement of 1793 without any question at all of a new partition of Poland.'

Austria, on her side, represented to Catherine that Prussia was extortionate in her demands. It was necessary for her safety that her own territory should be enlarged. Thugut declared that Austria had always regretted the partitions of Poland, as injurious to her interests. If such a partition was unavoidable, she must, of course, ask for her own share, that she might not be altogether thrown into the shade by perfidious Prussia. He therefore claimed the country between the Prussian borders, the Pilica, the Vistula, the Bug, Lipsk, and the Russian frontiers. Besides this, he claimed additional compensation, either in a French district, or in the Venetian provinces.*

Catherine was neither to be cajoled nor coerced into

* *Von Sybel*, Vol. IV., p. 166, Perry's Translation.

giving up her lion's share of Poland. 'Take half France,' she said, 'take Venetia, take Turkish lands: we have no objection; but in Poland the Bug must be our frontier.'*

There was no spirit in Austria to contend against so firm a will. The Empress perceived—indeed she was plainly told—that, provided Prussia were not gratified, the Austrian Court was ready to yield to the utmost desires of Russia. Then Austria gave up her demand of Volhynia, and a treaty was signed at St. Petersburg on January 3, 1795. By this third and final partition, Russia was to receive a country comprising about 44,500 square miles, Austria somewhat more than 20,000 square miles, Prussia, on condition of her assent and her guarantee of the territory assigned to Russia and Austria, about 16,000 square miles.

The grasping ambition of Catherine extended to a further project. She wished to erect a Principality of Dacia for a Russian Grand Duke, while Austria was to receive Servia and Bosnia as her share of the spoils of Turkey.

The Prussian Minister Tauenzien protested against the treaty of partition, and said that unless Cracow and Sandomir remained Prussian provinces the partition was impossible, and there was no other course than to leave Poland in the same position she had held since the last rebellion. But the Russian Chancellor here intervened, and said, 'The three Courts have acknowledged the partition to be necessary to

* *Von Sybel*, Vol. IV., p. 167.

their self-preservation: Prussia herself was the first to moot the question and to maintain the unavoidable necessity of the measure: Poland is dead and gone for ever, and the dead cannot at pleasure be called to life again.* *Finis Poloniae* might then truly have been declared.

The complete subjugation and final partition of Poland had cost Catherine infinite pains. It was not enough to excite internal dissensions; to give Potocki and others hopes of ruling their country, to be thrown away as broken tools when they had served her purpose; it was not enough to cover the whole country with her invincible legions. Beyond all this, it was necessary to obtain the aid of Austria and Prussia, and this aid was not to be obtained if the eyes of those Powers were fixed on Poland alone. 'I rack my brain,' said Catherine to a confidant, 'to make the Viennese and Berlin Cabinets interfere in the affairs of France. I should like to see their hands full of business, that my own might be free; for I have very many unfinished schemes before me, and Austria and Prussia ought to be fully occupied that they may not hinder me.'†

This occurred at the beginning of the intrigues of the Powers to bring about the third partition. When the treaty of Petersburg was signed, and Poland was doomed to perish, a declaration in more solemn form was made in a Russian memorial to the Government at Berlin. The Empress, it was said, had heard with

* *Von Sybel*, Vol. IV., p. 174.

† *Ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 303.

the greatest astonishment the proposition of Prussia to preserve, under certain contingencies, the existence of Poland. This was one of those wishes which might indeed *arise in the heart*, but the fulfilment of which could not be hoped for, because it was contrary to the nature of things.* Ostermann, her Chancellor, to show how much the heart of his Imperial Mistress had been affected by the miseries of Poland, added: 'We may boldly affirm that the title of the Empress to her portion of Poland is not the work of a moment, or of chance, but the creation of thirty years of labours, cares, and colossal efforts of every kind; we may affirm that, in comparison with these, Austria and Prussia have received as an unbought gift all the advantages which they have reaped, and will reap in Poland.'†

Such was the maze of intrigue, selfishness, treachery and hypocrisy in which Great Britain found herself involved while pursuing the task of delivering Europe from the spectre of the French Revolution. The separate aims of Austria and Prussia in the prosecution of the war complicated every movement, and paralysed every plan of campaign, while Pitt heaped upon them subsidy after subsidy at the cost of the Treasury of Great Britain.

From the period when Lord Townshend signed the Barrier Treaty the Court of Vienna had felt the obligation of defending Belgium as a burthen and a sacrifice.‡ At the time of the French Revolution

* *Von Sybel*, Vol. IV., p. 178.

† *Ibid.*

‡ See Coxe's *House of Austria*.

Austria was bent upon exchanging the Belgian provinces for Bavaria, and it was said that the Elector was not averse to the bargain. Indeed, some French generals, highly placed, had hinted that France would willingly see the Low Countries in the hands of a king not more powerful than the Elector.

Pitt, on the other hand, insisted strongly on the defence of Belgium by his allies. But all his representations, and even his lavish gifts of British money were made in vain. Plans of campaign ending in a march to Paris were proposed, discussed, and abandoned; victories were gained by the Austrian and Prussian arms leading only to the retreat of the victorious troops; the cause of Lewis was openly abandoned, and the fortresses taken by the Austrians hoisted the Austrian flag. At a later period Russia sent to Belgium General Korsakoff, who reported retreats without battles, nay, even in the moment of victory. 'Is it treachery?' said Suboff, a Russian. 'It is not possible for us,' said Markoff, another Russian, 'to imperil Russian troops in your unfortunate war.'

Pitt, his colleagues and agents, Grenville, Windham, and Malmesbury, were enraged at this behaviour of the allies.

In fact, the mismanagement of the war arose not from any want of capacity in the Austrian and German generals to whom the direction of military movements was entrusted, but from the entire want of harmony in the political designs of the allied Cabinets. While the British Treasury was paying

50,000*l.* a month into the Prussian Exchequer in order to secure Brussels and Antwerp against the French, the King of Prussia was intent upon marching his army to Posen, and securing his share of the spoils of Poland. While Lord Spencer and Mr. Grenville were writing from Vienna to complain of the want of energy of Thugut, abundant activity was displayed by that Minister in securing for Austria territory in France, or in Bavaria, or in Venetia, or in Turkey, or anywhere except in the Low Countries, which the British Government wished at any price to defend.

The fall of a coalition founded on such discordant views was easily to be foreseen. Pitt could at any time obtain loud cheers from his supporters in the House of Commons, and a large majority at the end of every debate. But to resist the enthusiasm of the young Republic of France, and to enable the Duke of York and the Prince of Coburg to defeat the skilful advances of Pichegru, of Hoche, and of Moreau, was far beyond his power. His guineas failed to purchase glory.

The rapid success of France astounded the polite world of London, of Vienna, and of Berlin, but answered the expectations of all sound thinkers. In 1794, Holland fell before the French advance, and the British troops were hooted on their way to the sea. In 1795, Prussia made a treaty at Basle with the French Republic, yielding the whole left bank of the Rhine, and for eleven years sank into an inglorious neutrality. In 1799 Austria, repeatedly

defeated in the field, and driven out of Italy by the marvellous genius of Napoleon Bonaparte, signed the treaty of Campo Formio, by which she surrendered the Low Countries, which she had long wished to lose, and absorbed the territory of the Venetian Republic, which she had long wished to acquire.

During all this period the French Republic had not done otherwise than repeat the lessons which, in the infancy of Rome, had been taught by the people of Rome to the people of Veei. 'The people of Veei,' says Machiavel, 'believed that by attacking the Romans disunited they should defeat them; and the attack, on the contrary, caused the union of the Romans, and their own ruin. . . . And so for the future will be deceived whoever, in a similar way, and for a similar cause, shall think to oppress a nation.' *

As Rome in her vigorous infancy strangled the serpents which invaded her cradle, so France in her luxurious old age grasped her weapons and drove off the robbers who sought to rifle her.

At length, but not till after Pitt's death, the nations of Europe, tormented by the exactions, oppressed by the despotism, and enraged by the insolence of France, rose in resistance, and vindicated their rights to independence. Had Pitt waited for that time, he might have lived to see Spain achieve her wished-for vengeance against her cruel invader; Germany combine by a glorious

* Machiavel, *Discorsi*.

effort of patriotism and virtue ; Holland recall the House of Orange ; and his own country, England, triumphant at Salamanca, Vittoria, and Waterloo. Yet who can wonder that England, upon seeing that her debt had been increased from 240 to 900 millions, and her hands bound by so many coalitions in support of vicious and selfish Courts, should turn with disgust from continental alliances, and even doubt the obligation of fulfilling solemn treaties ?

Such being the general view which I take of the Great Revolutionary War, I think it may interest those who study the historical events of past times to look back to some particular periods which between 1792 and 1815 attract attention from special circumstances, or from their bearing on the present and future state of Europe.

A treaty between England, Prussia, and Holland was negotiated and signed at the Hague in May 1794. By this treaty England agreed to pay, in conjunction with the Dutch Republic, 50,000*l.* a-month, on certain conditions, to the King of Prussia. But as the King of Prussia, intent upon aggrandisement in Poland, entirely failed to comply with those conditions, Pitt, full of indignation, gave orders that no further instalments of the subsidy should be paid. On October 25, 1794, Baron Hardenberg delivered a note to Lord Malmesbury, by which he declared that his royal master considered this suspension of payment as a rupture of the Treaty of the Hague, and should no further trouble himself with

its provisions. Upon this abrupt declaration, Lord Malmesbury wrote to Lord Grenville:—

I should feel myself undeserving of any indulgence if I could impute to myself the failure of this great measure; but no experience, nor habits of business, no prudence, nor care, can read so deep into the human mind as to foresee that a great Sovereign and his Ministers would be so regardless of their personal honour, and so forgetful of their public interests and glory as to refuse to be bound in June by a Treaty, ratified with their full consent and approbation in May.*

But while Prussia was acting with so much perfidy, and Austria with so much selfishness, Pitt induced the House of Commons to gorge both Powers with extravagant subsidies, and successfully loaded his rival with reproaches for his consistent and unextinguishable love of peace. Mr. Cobden says with true and honourable admiration:—

It is impossible to read the speeches of Fox, at this time, without feeling one's heart yearn with admiration and gratitude for the bold and resolute manner in which he opposed the war, never yielding and never repining, under the most discouraging defeats; and although deserted by many of his friends in the House, taunted with having only a score of followers left, and obliged to admit that he could not walk the streets without being insulted, by hearing the charge made against him of carrying on an improper correspondence with the enemy in France, yet bearing it all with uncomplaining manliness and dignity. The annals of Parliament do not record a nobler struggle in a nobler cause.†

* *Diaries and Correspondence of the Earl of Malmesbury*, Vol. III., p. 243.

† Cobden's *Political Writings*, Vol. I., p. 415.

In the month of May 1794 Lord Elgin asked Thugut whether the Emperor would not send fresh troops to Belgium to follow up the successes which the allies had already gained. Thugut replied that no fresh troops would be sent, and added that it was very doubtful whether the possession of the Netherlands were worth any further efforts on the part of Austria. Lord Elgin, not a little surprised, said that in that case England would have to confine herself to the protection of Holland. Thugut replied coolly that such a course would be the right one, and that no better measure could be adopted than the immediate evacuation of the Netherlands. This answer astonished Lord Elgin, and when reported in London, made the British Ministers very indignant. Some soothing expressions were then used, but no long time elapsed before the Emperor returned to Vienna, and gave orders for the total evacuation of the Austrian Netherlands by his troops. In fact the eyes of the Austrian Court were directed, not to Brussels and Antwerp, but to Cracow; nor was the prevailing feeling of Vienna one of horror at the French massacres, but one of jealousy at Prussian conquests in Poland. Indeed, some Austrian agents spoke with complacency of peace with France, then under the sole guidance of Robespierre.

Nor was the British Government entirely disinterested in its policy, or in its direction of the conduct of the war. Sir Archibald Alison speaks in the following terms of the siege of Dunkirk, undertaken at Mr. Pitt's express desire:—

If the conduct of the allies had been purposely intended to develop the formidable military strength which had grown up in the French Republic, they could not have adopted measures better calculated to effect their object than were actually pursued. Four months of success, which might have been rendered decisive, had been followed by the most blameable inactivity. After having broken the frontier line of fortresses, and defeated the covering army of France in a pitched battle, when within fifteen marches of Paris, and at the head of a splendid army of a hundred and thirty thousand effective men, after fully providing for their communications, they thought fit to separate their forces, and instead of pushing on to the centre of the Republican power, pursue independent plans of aggrandisement. The British, with their allies, amounting to above thirty-five thousand men, moved towards Dunkirk, so long the object of their maritime jealousy, while forty-five thousand of the Imperialists sat down before Quesnoy, and the remainder of their vast army was broken into detachments to preserve the communications.

From this ruinous division may be dated all the subsequent disasters of the campaign. Had they held together, and pushed on vigorously against the masses of the enemy's forces, now severely weakened and depressed by defeat, there cannot be a doubt that the object of the war would have been gained. The decrees for levying the population *en masse* were not passed by the Convention for some weeks afterwards, and the forces they produced were not organised for three months. The mighty genius of Carnot had not as yet assumed the helm of affairs; the Committee of Public Salvation had not hitherto acquired its terrible energy; everything promised great results to vigorous and simultaneous operations. It was a resolution of the British Cabinet, in opposition to the declared and earnest wish of Cobourg and all the allied generals, which occasioned this fatal division. The impartial historian must confess with a sigh, that it was British interests which here interfered with

the great objects of the war, and that by compelling her contingent to separate for the siege of Dunkirk, Great Britain largely contributed to postpone for a long period, its glorious termination. Posterity has had ample room to lament the error: a war of twenty years, deeply checkered with disaster, the addition of six hundred millions to the public debt, the sacrifice of millions of brave men, may be in a great degree traced to this unhappy resolution. For its adoption, on selfish grounds, Britain is still suffering a just punishment.' *

It may well be doubted whether the author is right in supposing that if the allies had pushed on in one body the object of the war would have been attained. But there can be no doubt that when the allied Powers, instead of placing before their eyes the liberation of Lewis, the integrity of the French monarchy, and the restoration of order, fixed their minds on the aggrandisement of Austria and Prussia, the subjugation of Poland, and the protection of English trade by the capture of Dunkirk, they gave intense force to the motives of Frenchmen for resisting the arms of the Coalition. Every Royalist felt that the advance of the Austrian frontier to the Somme, and the restoration of Alsace to Germany were not objects for which he would fight with enthusiasm, or rejoice at if attained.

In fact, the prolongation of the war from 1795 to 1801 had no sufficient cause. The fury of the Jacobin democracy had greatly subsided, and, on the other hand, Pitt had no reasonable prospect of

* Alison's *Hist. of Europe*, Vol. III., pp. 64 and 65.

rescuing Belgium or even Holland from the French. When, therefore, he was freed from the pride and obstinacy of his colleague, Lord Grenville, he willingly lent his aid to Mr. Addington to put an end to the war, and in Parliament heartily supported the peace of Amiens, which he had privately promoted.* But the feverish ambition of Bonaparte would not rest satisfied with the supremacy he had acquired in France. Mr. Addington on his side, instead of plainly saying that the treatment of Holland and Switzerland was unbearable, and if extended to other parts of Europe would make war inevitable, refused to fulfil the conditions of the definitive Treaty of Amiens, and thus put himself in the wrong in form if not in substance. Napoleon hoped on this occasion to have the Continent on his side; but the Powers clearly saw that their danger lay on the side of France, and not on that of England: they therefore speedily gave their sympathy and their hopes to Great Britain.†

It is not necessary to record here the splendid triumphs of Austerlitz, of Jena, and of Wagram. The battle of Austerlitz was the knell of the dying Pitt. Many errors, and much ignorance of the Continent had marked the close of his career; his former financial skill and caution were sacrificed to public extravagance and waste; in his latter years he threw aside, in compliance with the King's insanity, the assistance he might have derived from Fox and Grey, Windham and Spencer. These were faults and failings, but, in

* *Diaries of the Earl of Malmesbury.*

† See Thiers' *Le Consulat et L'Empire.*

spite of all, he had a soul devoted to the welfare of his country ; he was above every mean and sordid passion ; he gave his life to his duty, and if not wise in his means, he was always noble in his ends.

The keen sagacity of Lord Wellesley saw clearly that a passion for glory and for power so insatiable as that of Napoleon, even when guided by his astounding abilities both for war and administration, could not always be successful, and must in the end lead to a catastrophe. The conquest of Spain roused the pride of that noble and fallen people to a degree of hatred and energy which did not seem to be in them. I remember seeing, in 1808, the young and florid Mata-rosa, afterwards Count Toreno, and the dark olive-coloured Arguelles at a breakfast at Lady Spencer's, at Wimbledon. Their appearance as delegates from Asturias, to implore the aid of England to throw off the yoke of Napoleon excited general sympathy. The Spanish peasant bore in his scribe the pebble by which the Goliath of Europe was to be struck.

The next cause of the fall of Napoleon was the attempted conquest of Russia.

England had now two allies who were in earnest, and who would not shrink from the contest till it was won. The extraordinary military talents of the Duke of Wellington made Spain and Portugal successful ; the determination of the Russian people overcame the hosts of the greatest general of the age. The Duke of Wellington was of opinion that if the autumn of 1812, instead of being prematurely cold, had been of

average mildness, the great army of Napoleon would have been more surely and more completely destroyed.* I leave that opinion to skilful strategists to discuss.

When, after Leipzig, the Austrian, Prussian, and Russian armies arrived on the banks of the Rhine, they put forth a proclamation remarkable for the moderation and magnanimity of its tone. They acknowledged the valour and previous successes of the French army.

‘The allies,’ they affirm, ‘do not make war on France, but on that preponderance which, to the misfortune of Europe and of France, the Emperor Napoleon has long exercised beyond the limits of France. They desire that France should be powerful and happy; that commerce should revive and the arts flourish; that its territory should preserve an extent unknown under its ancient kings; because the French power, great and strong, is, in Europe, one of the fundamental bases of the social edifice; because a great people can only be tranquil so long as they are happy; because a brave nation is not to be regarded as overthrown because in its turn it has experienced reverses in an obstinate and bloody struggle in which it has fought with its accustomed valour. But the allied powers wish themselves also to be tranquil and happy—they wish a state of peace which, by a wise division of power, by a just balance, may hereafter preserve their people from the calamities without number which for twenty years have oppressed Europe.’†

Had the just balance here spoken of included the people of Italy and Germany, as well as the Sovereigns; and had the ruler of France not attempted

* MS. Letter to Lord Dalhousie.

† Declaration of Frankfort.

again to extend her preponderance beyond her stipulated limits, peace might have been long unshaken.

Unhappily it was not Fox, or Grey, or Canning, but Lord Castlereagh who presided over the new distribution of Europe. It seemed to be a main object with the military monarchies of Europe to extinguish republics. Holland, our old ally, who had been one of the first victims of the democratic robberies of the French Convention, became a monarchy under the House of Orange. Venice was annexed to Austria, Genoa to Piedmont. But besides these triumphs of monarchy, the Northern Powers, or Holy Alliance, proclaimed as an eternal truth that innovations which came from below could produce nothing but discord and ruin, whereas if they came from above they would be fertile in harmony and happiness. In pursuance of this political dogma Piedmont, Naples and Spain were restored to darkness and despotism. But the Revolution of France in 1830, and the fall of the Tory supremacy in England, which likewise occurred in 1830, changed the aspect of two of the chief and most enlightened countries of Europe. By degrees, or rather by fits and starts, Italy and Spain shook off the degrading yoke under which they had long groaned, and Belgium, under the auspices of Lord Grey and Lord Palmerston, became a free and neutral country. England and France, Spain and Portugal made a quadruple alliance to establish and maintain what was wrongly supposed to be the liberal dynasty of Queen Isabella. Italy, under the wise

government of Count Cavour, and with the help of a French army, threw off the chains of Austria. It cost England little effort to prevent the ruler of France from saving the Bourbon Dynasty of Naples. Garibaldi conquered Naples, and Victor Emanuel, the heir and representative of the House of Savoy became King of Italy. The event was happy, and the Italian people, guiltless of excesses, and moderate in the enjoyment of their new-found liberty, proved themselves worthy of union and freedom. Some of the advanced Liberals and the greater part of the press of England believed that Italy was incapable of union and unworthy of liberty. But the Government of Lord Palmerston never despaired.

A greater work than the union of Italy, and one threatening not only the supremacy of Austria, but the military primacy of France in Europe, remained to be accomplished. The sagacity of Count Cavour, and his patient achievement of a difficult task in the midst of obstacles and interruptions, had their parallel in a German statesman. While Austria blundered and Denmark outraged the feelings of Germans, Count Bismarck saw his way to that height of power which he has now so successfully reached.

The first provocation to the impulse of German patriotism came from Denmark. An exclusive narrow-minded Danish ministry, assisted by some shreds and patches of English parties, attempted to convert the German inhabitants of Sleswig into Danes ; to deprive them of the ministrations of clergymen of

their own nationality, and to drive their children from the common schools in which they had been accustomed to learn their letters in the language of their fathers. The excitement in Germany was deep, but it did not at once burst into flame. For twelve years the smouldering fire lay beneath the ashes, growing hotter and hotter, till tradesmen and soldiers, philosophers and ministers of state were burning with resentment, sympathy and indignation.

The British Government tried in various ways to conduct the lightning, and carry off harmlessly the storm which they foresaw. An attempt at conciliation between Germany and Denmark had nearly proved successful. Founded on a concession to Sleswig of full autonomy, and a concert of the four parts of the kingdom in making provision for extraordinary expenses, this plan obtained the assent of Austria and Prussia, and of such men as M. Quaade, the most calm and judicious of Danish statesmen. Denmark would thus have obtained the integrity of her dominions which five great Powers had declared to be desirable; France was ready to give her assent, and the Germans of Sleswig would have had spiritual ministrations for themselves and competent German teachers for their children.

It pleased some English advisers of great influence to meddle in this affair; they were successful in thwarting the British Government, and in the end, with the professed view, and perhaps the real intention, of helping Denmark, their friendship tended to deprive her of Holstein and Sleswig altogether.

It is true that Germany, so long as there was a hope of arresting the oppressions of the Danish Ministry had no just cause for going to war. It could not be denied, indeed, that these were very grievous: the British Government had asked as a moderate concession that German proprietors in Sleswig should be allowed to employ private tutors for their children; but the Danes refused to allow two or more families to employ one teacher; each family was forced to maintain a separate tutor. This restriction on families of moderate means was very grievous and injurious.

Still the British Government held on. Lord Kimberley was sent to Copenhagen to induce the Danish Cabinet not to absorb Sleswig, in spite of treaties and promises, into the Danish monarchy.

There was something rotten in the state of Denmark. Five Powers — France, Russia, Prussia, Austria, and England—had promised to acknowledge under the then heir to the Crown the integrity of the Danish Monarchy. Of these five, Prussia and Austria were hostile; France and Russia, while they acknowledged the King of Denmark, were indifferent; England alone sincerely endeavoured to fulfil her promise. Denmark still refused to comply with her own repeated engagements to the German Powers. Yet it must not be supposed that the German Powers were compelled to embrace war as the only remedy left to them. Ambition mingled largely with their motives. Sleswig was a convenient possession; Kiel a harbour well worth having. That German

enthusiasm was not excited solely by sympathy for the wrongs of their persecuted and oppressed countrymen, has been clearly proved by recent events. The Lutherans of Livonia and the German provinces on the Baltic coast have suffered persecutions more severe than those inflicted by the Danes in Sleswig. But those provinces are barren, and in the possession of a powerful ally. The consequence has been that Germans have seen the ill-usage of the Lutheran subjects of Russia in silence.

Lord Palmerston used to say that in certain cases a State was bound to make war; in certain other cases a State had a right to make war. One of the former is where a guarantee has been given; one of the latter where title and possession have been recognised by treaty.

The Danish treaty fell under the latter category.

It thus became a grave question for Lord Palmerston's Cabinet whether, if they could obtain a binding stipulation from Denmark in favour of her German subjects, they should advise the Queen to offer to the King of Denmark naval and military aid for his defence.

The Cabinet, after much deliberation, decided that in the case supposed they should offer to assist Denmark by force only in case France would join in an alliance for that purpose.

Although somewhat reluctant at the time to insist upon that condition, I am fully persuaded it was a condition not only wise but absolutely essential. Lord Palmerston was convinced that it would be

inexcusable to rush into a war against the whole of Germany, inflamed and excited, without the security of a substantial alliance.

France would have furnished us that alliance. Had England and France guaranteed the performance by Denmark of her own solemn engagements, Prussia and Austria would have had no case for war; had they entered upon it, the military forces of France and England, the naval forces of England and France, would have been a powerful assistance to Denmark.

The Emperor of the French twice rejected this proposal. At this time he favoured the cause of the nationalities. For his own sake, it is to be regretted that he ever adopted that cause, or that, doing so, he did not respect it in 1870.

A further attempt at pacification was made at the Conference of London. But Denmark, with a small army, and guns which could not reach the Prussian army, was confident in her own power of resistance to the end. She declined the good offices of the neutral Powers, and fell a victim to her blindness. Lord Palmerston, by a happy suggestion, saved her from the probable destruction of her capital.

In the war of 1866 Lord Derby, then Prime Minister, prudently declined to interfere. German patriots had long desired to exclude Austria from Germany; by the treaty of Prague she was excluded both from Germany and Italy.

It was now obvious that Germany was one day to be united under the Hohenzollerns. The process might have been slow, might have been peaceable ;

the Imperial Government of France, hurried on by a packed Assembly, decided that the stream should be a torrent, and a torrent mingled with blood.

The marvellous scene has passed so lately before our eyes that it is needless to recall its prominent parts. But there are some grave matters for reflection which have hardly attracted due attention.

The extreme futility of the pretences for a declaration of war put forth by the French Government seem almost to have escaped from memory. The first announcement was that the King of Prussia had allowed a member of the House of Hohenzollern to be a candidate for the throne of Spain, and that France must go to war. Then it was known that the King of Prussia had induced the Prince of Hohenzollern to withdraw his son's name as a candidate. Next it appeared that the French Ambassador had urged the King of Prussia to declare that at no time and in no circumstances should Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern be a candidate for the throne of Spain. The King, having declined to make this degrading declaration, the French Ambassador demanded another audience. The King naturally asked whether he had any new request to make, and when the Ambassador said he wished only to argue again in favour of his former proposal, the King said in effect, 'If you have only the same proposal to make to which I have already given an answer, you had better speak to my Ministers.' This was the grave insult which the blood of a million of men was

to revenge. Such was the absurd frivolity of the French pretexts for war.

It had been understood that the French Government took no interest in the choice of a successor to the Spanish throne. Had it been otherwise, the Emperor of the French might fairly have proposed that the five great Powers of Europe should forbid any member of their reigning families to accept the crown of Spain. All the Powers, and Prussia among the rest, would in all probability have assented to so equitable an agreement.

War having been declared on these shallow pretexts, and M. Rouher having boasted in the name of the Senate of the preparations which four years of unceasing vigilance had enabled the Emperor to complete, it was found, when the war broke out, that instead of 250,000 men, only 140,000 could be placed on the frontier of France; that the commissariat was defective, the transport defective, the strategy defective, the tactics defective. This proved little more than the fact that the Emperor, though a man of sense and prudence, had not that marvellous genius, which had put his uncle on a par with Alexander and Cæsar, and made him superior, in point of talents, to any other man who had undertaken to lead mankind in the field and in the Cabinet.

Still, had the bulk of the French forces retired on Paris, and occupied the forts of the capital, it is doubtful whether the German legions could have overcome a well disciplined and numerous garrison

ready to make sallies day after day on any point to which they might be directed.

But neither General Trochu nor any other man could hope to create a new army, and to fling a body of recruits against the veteran hosts of Germany with any chance of success. It became a question of skill and patience, and in that contest General Moltke had no competitor.

The French having failed in their unjust aggression, bethought themselves of deposing their sovereign, and making a mob revolution in favour of a small minority of the representatives of the people. The ruin which the Empire had begun, the Republic completed. Before the siege of Paris commenced, when the prospects of France were most cloudy, when the catastrophe of Sedan had taken place, when Strasburg and Metz were bending to capitulation, Count Bismarck and M. Jules Favre met at Ferrieres. Count Bismarck proposed an armistice, and, without laying down terms of peace, intimated that Germany would expect the cession of Alsace and a part of Lorraine. M. Jules Favre thundered, on the other side, 'Not an inch of our territory, not a stone of our fortresses.'

It appeared to me that Count Bismarck's suggestions were moderate and reasonable. I did not conceal my opinion; my friends, some of them members of the Government, were well aware of it. One of our weekly newspapers alluded to my opinion as that of an old-fashioned politician. My judgment was founded, however, not on the treaties of old times,

or on the precedents of Napoleon's days of conquest; but on a calm comparison of the existing means of France, with her young undisciplined forces, opposed to the admirable legions of artillery, infantry, and cavalry led by German Princes and German Generals. The daily lies poured into the ear of France, the boast that no German soldier would escape alive from French valour, the restless energy of Citizen Gambetta, seemed to me all to portend such a treaty of peace as the Government of M. Thiers has signed.

But a kind of political romance at this time seized upon the minds of the English people.

The idea that appeared to pervade the popular organs of opinion and a liberal 'Review' was that we were approaching a golden age when, if war could not be altogether prevented, cessions of territory were never to be made or allowed. One very able newspaper quietly suggested that England, after forcing Germany to be content without an inch of French territory, should next turn round upon France and go to war to prevent her acquisition of the left bank of the Rhine. In the words of a Spanish orator, I should be disposed to say, 'These are dreams—dreams of a good man—but still dreams.'

To come down from these Saturnian skies, it must, I think, be admitted that, Germany having prevailed in the war, it was for her to lay down terms of peace, and for France to reject or accept them, under pain, if they were rejected, of a continuance of the war.

Count Bismarck's calculation, founded on his know-

ledge of the opinions and wishes of Germany, seemed to be that France defeated would be sure to pant for revenge, and that the best way of either preventing her from going to war, or repelling her attack successfully if she could not be held back, was to add Strasburg and other fortresses to Landau, and to hold Alsace and part of Lorraine as German territory.

The Emperor of the New German Confederation is a man of military honour; his son, the Crown Prince, is distinguished no less for his abhorrence of war, and civil virtue, than for valour and conduct in the field of battle. Such was the guarantee of peace.

On the other hand, the attachment of the Alsatians to France was held to be inextinguishable, and the junction of Alsace to Germany was glibly compared with the union of Venice to Austria.

Of Venice, peopled by Romans, or Romanised Italians, who fled from Alaric in the fifth century, and who, till the end of the eighteenth, had remained attached to Italy? Of Alsace, which was so German that when it was joined to France Lewis XIV. offered to make himself a member of the German Confederation in order to qualify himself to hold it? Of Alsace, where the sons of the peasantry were obliged by law to go to school in order that they might by compulsion learn French? Of Alsace, which even now is preparing to relinquish its French habits, and learn the lesson of German nationality?

Really, these ideas are too absurd.

In the midst of all this hubbub Lord Granville preserved the even tenor of his way, and pursued the steady path of neutrality, without bending to the right hand or to the left. The despatch to St. Petersburg of October 16 was a mistake, but the attempt to mitigate Germany's exactions of money, however unlikely to succeed, was honourable and praiseworthy. The reputation of Lord Granville as Foreign Minister was raised by his maintenance of peace with dignity and honour.

And now? What is the change effected? What are we to expect?

It may be said, in answer, that nothing has happened which ought to surprise us. As the nations of Europe grew in strength, and as they became united under a firm authority, they extended their power, and made themselves formidable to their neighbours. The process has gone on from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. When Ferdinand and Isabella had united Castile and Aragon, and by their combined arms conquered the last Moorish kingdom of Spain, they aimed at supremacy in Europe. When Charles V. became Emperor of Germany, and extended his dominions from Flanders, Milan and Naples to Mexico and Peru, his supremacy was confirmed, and the Spanish Tercios were acknowledged to be the finest troops in Europe. When France had settled her government, subduing her rebellious princes and factious nobles, the spirit of Condé and the charge of the French chivalry overthrew the Spanish armies, weakened by civil and spiritual

despotism. For centuries France fought England and divided Germany. Cardinal Richelieu always sought by intrigue and bold policy to win over to French interests the weaker princes and more powerful nobles. According to Montesquieu, he taught Austria the secret of her weakness, and France the secret of her strength. When Napoleon as First Consul was about to make war on Germany, he said to a political adherent, 'I know I cannot make France stronger than she is, but I can make her enemies weaker.'

The empire of Napoleon was dissolved by excess of ambition; the Sovereigns of Europe allied at Frankfort and in London gave back to a Bourbon king the territories of the old monarchy. Only two conditions were virtually annexed to this restoration of the France of 1790. In 1818 all the Powers agreed at Aix-la-Chapelle that the family of Napoleon should not be restored to the throne. It was implied that the boundaries of 1814 and 1815 should not be passed. In 1851-2 the first of these conditions was dispensed with by the consent of Austria, Great Britain, Prussia, and Russia. On the other hand, Napoleon III. agreed to be bound by existing treaties, and during several years appeared to adhere to the spirit of this condition. The annexation of Savoy and Nice was the first open violation of it. Gradually the treaties of 1815 were more and more openly denounced, and were declared to be objects of detestation to the French Sovereign. The path of peace, the pursuit

of trade and of national wealth, which had been wisely followed, the counsels of England, which had been accepted, were abandoned, and the project of making France secure by the conquest of the fortresses on the left bank of the Rhine was ostentatiously proclaimed. Thus the whole compact of 1815 was violently broken, and had Germany been placed in any real danger it would have been the duty of England and of Russia to have armed in her behalf. But Nemesis was not sleeping, nor was Prussia. On the 13th of July the French Government proclaimed war in the Legislative Body; on the 3rd of August the battle of Weissenberg was fought by the Crown Prince of Prussia on French territory. Sedan, Strasburg, Metz, and Paris completed what Weissenberg had begun. The sceptre, or rather the sword of Europe has passed from the arm of France, to be wielded by the arm of Germany. She has completed by war a process which France had not the smallest right to interrupt.

But more remains.

The account of Prussia and France is thus given by Col. Stoffen, a French military attaché at Berlin:—

Again, looking at the moral condition of the contending countries, one cannot but admit that Prussia is not only the more cautious and the more vigilant of the two, but that her people are also the most highly educated and disciplined in the world. Who that has lived here (Berlin) will deny that the Prussians are energetic, patriotic, and teeming with youthful vigour; that they are not corrupted by sensual pleasures, but are manly, have earnest convictions, do not

think it beneath them to reverence sincerely what is noble and lofty? What a melancholy contrast does France offer in all this! Having sneered at everything, she has lost the faculty of respecting anything. Virtue, family life, patriotism, honour, religion, are represented to a frivolous generation as fitting subjects of ridicule. The theatres have become schools of shamelessness and obscenity. Drop by drop poison is instilled into the very core of an ignorant and enervated society, which has neither the insight nor the energy left to amend its institutions, nor—which would be the most necessary step to take—to become better informed or more moral. One after the other the fine qualities of the nation are dying out. Where is the generosity, the loyalty, the charm of our *esprit*, and our former elevation of soul? If this goes on, the time will come when this noble race of France will be known only by its faults. And France has no idea that while she is sinking more earnest nations are stealing a march upon her, are distancing her on the road to progress, and are preparing for her a secondary position in the world. . . . I should wish some enlightened and unprejudiced Frenchmen to come to Prussia and make this country their study. They would soon discover that they were living in the midst of a strong, earnest, and intelligent nation, entirely destitute, it is true, of all noble and delicate feelings, of all fascinating charms, but endowed with every solid virtue, and alike distinguished for untiring industry, order, and economy, as well as for patriotism, a strong sense of duty, and that consciousness of personal dignity which in their case is so happily blended with respect for authority and obedience to the law. They would see a country with firm, sound and moral institutions, whose upper classes are worthy of their rank, and by possessing the highest degree of culture, devoting themselves to the service of the State, and setting an example of patriotism, know how to preserve the influence legitimately their own. They would find a State with an excellent administration, where everything is in its right place, and where the most

admirable order prevails in every branch of the social and political system. Prussia may be well compared to a massive structure of lofty proportions and astounding solidity, which, though it has nothing to delight the eye or speak to the heart, cannot but impress us with its grand symmetry, equally observable in its broad foundations as in the strong and sheltering roof.

After reading this description, can anyone wonder at the result? The Almighty Maker of heaven and earth has not ill-bestowed His gifts. If He has made man, in possession of freedom of will, liable to yield to temptation and subject to sin, He has also endowed him with a moral sense, and a religious faculty. By a firm moral sense Scipio and Cato, Pætus and Arria, Mucius and Regulus conquered pain and the love of life. By religion martyrs have been enabled to welcome death as a glorious deliverance, and pious women have been taught to lead a holy life in the midst of luxury and licentiousness. Voltaire, indeed, thought that the rich might indulge in vice and infidelity, while virtue and credulity might be maintained among the poor. Burke was persuaded that 'vice itself lost half its evil by losing all its grossness.'

But such is not the world ordained by the Creator. It was not indifference or indolence that made the Reformation; it was not infidelity that inspired the soul of Luther, or sharpened the swords of the soldiers of Cromwell.

Are we in any danger of allowing our venerable Institutions to expire from languid doubts of their

utility, or from a selfish wish to consult on every occasion the expediency of the moment, the chances of an election, the passing whim of the multitude? I hope not; but unless some real attachment to true religion, to unshackled liberty, to institutions which deserve to be preserved, and a country which is worthy to be defended, prevail among us, not as a tame acquiescence but as a vivifying passion, we too may embrace the vices and follow the fate of France. "There is no reason to despair. The spirit of England is still high; her naval and military resources require only vigilance and a liberal expenditure. It is absurd to say that England is governed at a cost of seventy millions a-year. Nearly thirty millions are absorbed by the national debt and the sums appropriated to its gradual diminution. Does anyone wish to repudiate our obligations and refuse to pay the dividends due to the national creditor? No one. There are several millions of payments to the judges and constabulary necessary for the due administration of justice. Does anyone wish to dispense with judges and constabulary? No one. It is needless to go on with this examination. The real cost of establishments which might admit of reductions is, I believe, under thirty millions. It is, therefore, a gross fallacy to say that England is governed at an expense of seventy millions a-year. Let England only preserve her old spirit, and exercise sufficient vigilance to be ready to meet any dangers by which she may be assailed. We are happily not obliged to watch a

frontier which an enemy may pass with a million of men by railroad, or a night march. To invade England in force requires docks and harbours, building of steam-ships, preparations the note of which must reach our shores many weeks before actual invasion can take place. But for the purpose of defending ourselves, and our intimate allies, a navy and army are absolutely essential.

How to constitute and maintain this navy and army in an efficient state is a duty which the Government have taken upon themselves, and which they have hitherto very insufficiently performed. Happily, the tone has been lately raised, and it is admitted by a leading Minister of State that it will not be sufficient to make preparations for war, when war has been already begun. If this tone be fostered, the arm of England will still be powerful, and the peace which would otherwise be endangered may be preserved by the revived spirit of England—of England as it was, and will be. At the present time dangers exist which care may avert, and weakness may precipitate. Russia is about to rebuild her fleets, and her fortresses on the coast of the Black Sea. If she keeps the promises in Prince Gortchakoff's despatch, and observes faithfully the conditions of the Treaty of 1856, Europe may enjoy a long period of peace. But if she is tempted by the possession of an immense military and naval force, increased beyond all reasonable proportions—if she is encouraged by the forced inactivity of the Austrian Empire—Europe may be disturbed by war,

Turkey threatened with extinction, and England with decline.*

But the legions of the great civilised nations may secure Europe against the danger of such a war.

Nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia.

* See an article on the Military Policy of Russia, in the *Edinburgh Review* of July, 1871.



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